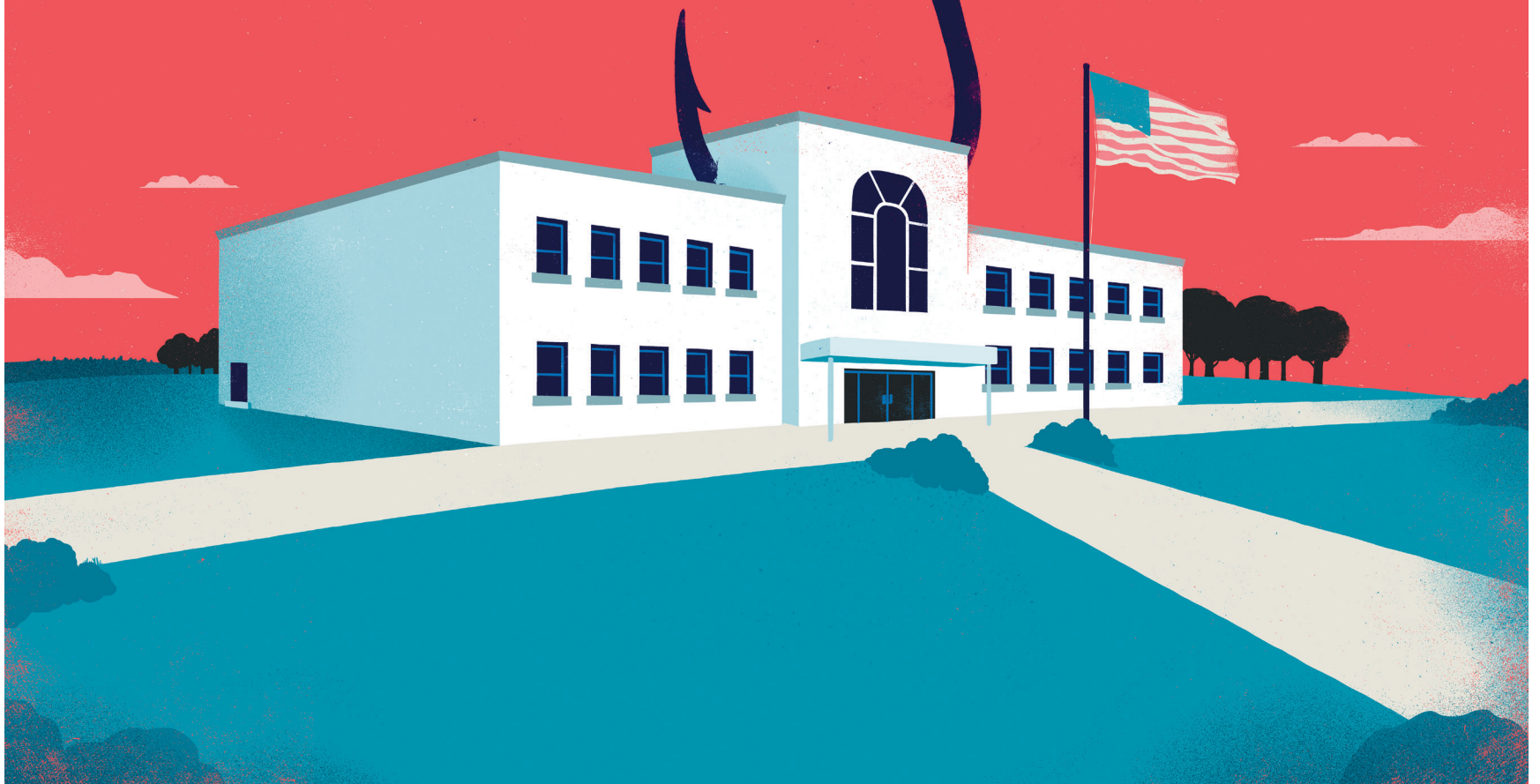


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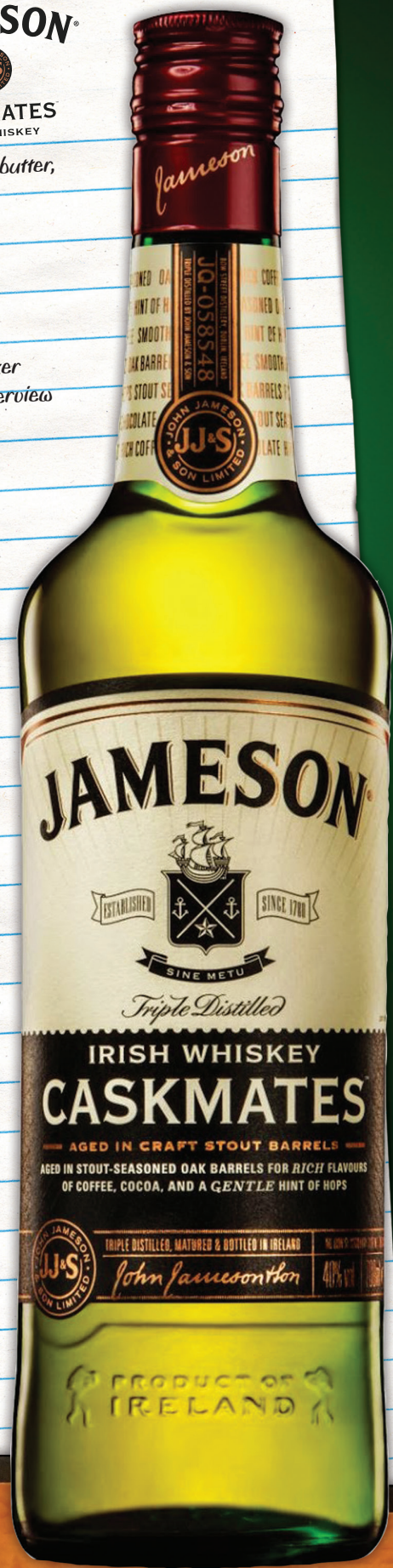
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For big money.

By Cory Zurowski

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THE SHORTLIST

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CHRIS JUHN

THE STAT SHEET

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Donald Trump's approval rating, making him the least popular president to enter office in 40 years

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Odds offered by Irish bookie Paddy Power on whether Trump will be impeached before finishing his term

300%

Growth in the number of Minnesota's medical marijuana patients in 2016

"And yet 30 percent of the people in this country would vote for him for president."

Reader Ben Peters responds to "Prior Lake grad Ben Sloan, charged in University of Minnesota molestation, was involved in 'vagina inspection' prank," at citypages.com

MAD SCIENTISTS

AFTER LAST NOVEMBER'S election, a majority of the Minnesota Legislature no longer believes in climate change, preferring to trust the more learned scientific opinions of a guy named Rod, whose Facebook profile photo is a picture of a monster truck.

Alas, lesser scientists might disagree. The Earth just recorded its third straight record hot year. Temperatures in the Arctic are "like totally off the charts compared to everything else," says Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA's Space Studies.

What Schmidt doesn't realize: If you bury your head in the sand, it's always a cool 70 degrees. Though it's kind of hard to see.

POPULAR STORIES AT CITYPAGES.COM

On Minnesota Gun Rights' page, a shameful showing of humanity after

DAYTON'S COLLAPSE

Minnesota Republicans introduce two **EXTREME GUN BILLS**

The depressing music acts willing to play **TRUMP'S DEPRESSING INAUGURATION**, ranked

Minneapolis mayor **BETSY HODGES'** Twitter mentions are horrifying

Faces of the 100,000-strong **WOMEN'S MARCH** in St. Paul

SETTLING FOR WAY LESS

Republicans have a plan to lower health costs:
Really bad insurance

Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Mazeppa) has never been a fan of health care for the masses. Or at least not Obamacare.

"We need to stop the march toward government takeover and turn directly to supporting individual health care, freedom, and choice," he wrote in the Rochester Post Bulletin in 2014.

But it's one thing to sit on the sidelines and talk about how you could do better. It's entirely another to actually come up with your own plan. Now we know what Drazkowski's definition of better health care really is.

It means the possibility of no coverage for cancer, prenatal care, mental health, and 65 other issues for the more than 100,000 Minnesotans who buy insurance on their own. These are among the details of the Minnesota House Repub-

licans' bill to address the state's health insurance crisis.

Last fall, Minnesotans who bought insurance without the help of an employer, and who earn too much for federal tax credits, were notified their premiums would rise an estimated 36 to 67 percent.

The unwanted news was a call to action. During the new legislative session, GOP and DFL lawmakers have been hammering out different strategies to provide some financial relief.

Both parties propose rebates for buyers. It's the House GOP plan that's raising eyebrows. Specifically, Drazkowski's amendment to it.

It says insurers must offer at least one plan that covers the nearly 70 medical issues mandated by state and federal law. These range from Lyme disease to

addiction services, OB-GYN access to in-patient care for childbirth. But after that, they can go wild, dropping all or some of those mandated by law.

The amendment would also apply to people who buy insurance through work, meaning companies could once again foist bad policies on their employees, says Rep. Diane Loeffler (DFL-Minneapolis).

She calls it "pick six" insurance — buy a cheaper policy by picking the six maladies you want covered just in case. Then roll the dice and hope you don't need health care for the other 60 or so not covered.

"If this were to become law," she says, "I think we'll see a lot more fundraisers for medical bills."

But Drazkowski appears to be mighty proud of his work.

"This is a great first step in reducing the very regulations that contribute to our soaring health care premiums," he wrote in a press release last week. "If someone wants to buy a plan that doesn't include certain benefits and they choose to pay the penalty, this gives Minnesotans that freedom to be covered while lowering their costs."



BILL BRANSON

The plan would allow for policies that don't cover cancer, diabetes, or 65 other ailments.

Lawmakers hope to hammer out a compromise before sending a final draft of the bill to Governor Dayton. —CORY ZUROWSKI



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The Governor's Twilight Zone

Remember, dear legislators: Dayton is more popular than all of you put together

On Monday night, Gov. Mark Dayton gave his seventh and second-to-last State of the State, presenting himself as the last bulwark against “some politicians” — read: Republican majorities — who are preparing “a feast of tax giveaways to a handful of wealthy individuals, corporations, and special interests.”

About 40 minutes into his speech, Dayton took a long, unsteady sip of water. He struggled through a few words of his next line, head nodding, and slumped over the podium. An eerie silence fell over the Capitol as Republicans called the speech to a halt.

Then the next day, the governor casually disclosed he'd been diagnosed with prostate cancer, saying he'd stay on the job while seeking treatment.

Dayton's lack of concern for his own welfare is one reason so many Minnesotans respect him. But these are scary times for progressives in this state. Mark Dayton's all they've got left.

He had already predicted a “very difficult” session, citing the likelihood that Republicans — most importantly, House Speaker Kurt Daudt — will play politics with the budget, tilting ever right-ward as they jockey for position in a 2018 governor's race.

At 69, and with no races left to run, Dayton's got no skin in the game. That ought to make him the only person worth listening to. Instead, it somehow makes him irrelevant, a “lame duck” with a measly 700-some days left in office.

But now's a good time for bullish conservatives in the Capitol to remember one thing: Mark Dayton is more popular than the lot of you combined.

In 2014, Dayton became the first governor in 20 years to win more than 50 percent of the vote. His 59 percent approval rating is 13th-highest among American governors.

Minnesotans have their reasons. Roughly 1.4 billion of them: the state's budget surplus, a \$6 billion turnaround from when he took office. Dayton arrived at it by taxing the wealthiest, smokers, and corporations. Dayton wants to spend it on childcare, early learning, tax cuts for families, broadband internet for rural people, jobs and education programs for minorities.

Dayton took from the rich and wants to give it to the poor. He's Robin Hood with creaky hips and a frown.

That grimace can be blamed on how much he hates the process. And how worried he is for his state.

With months before the deadline, he's already warned that a budget impasse might end in a shutdown. He's recalling 2011, when last he tussled with Republican majorities and eventually signed a deal he hated, just to keep the government in operation.

Is there any reason to think that won't happen again?

“No,” one DFL insider said, sighing. “We care, and they don't. The mentality among some of these people on the right wing of the right wing is just to watch the whole thing burn.”

Here's how that'll work: Conservatives point to the surplus as a sign the state is “over-taxed” and announce a plan to shred it with tax cuts. That's always popular, except for those who don't pay taxes. Namely, the kids and poor people Dayton likes.

Republicans haven't rolled out their tax bill yet, but let's assume they'll follow the

helpful guidance of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. They usually do. The corporate powerhouse spends millions backing Republicans, then spends millions more on lobbying to remind them. And the Chamber's priorities are getting rid of corporate property taxes and slashing corporate income taxes.

The Chamber also wants to get rid of the estate tax (i.e. the villainous “death tax”), which, at its \$2 million threshold, affects only the wealthiest 3 percent of recently dead Minnesotans.

Granting these rich man's wishes would leave the state billions of dollars in debt within a few years... unless we just stopped paying for stuff. In late December, key Republicans sent an ominous letter to state agencies, asking them to prepare plans for how they would weather a 10 percent budget cut.

That's steep, even in a time of deficit. To threaten that cut in a time of surplus is to declare war on the very idea of government.

These days even Dayton's successes look like failures in waiting. Last week he announced Minnesota would receive \$350 million in federal funds to buy farmland surrounding bodies of water. But only if the state ponies up nearly \$100 million.

When it comes to money for clean water, the well might be dry. While questioning a state water regulator, Rep. Mark Uglem (R-Champlin), a former paint manufacturing executive, asked why Minnesota doesn't consult with “other outside experts that disagree with your scientific analysis.”

And cattle farming Rep. Dale Lueck (R-Aitkin) wondered why regulators don't outsource their analysis to “the private sector,” who could “tell you ‘no’ in a micro-



Mike Mullen

second” if it's a bad idea.

In other words, just send a note to businesses asking, “Hey, sorry to bother you, but do you think we should regulate you?”

It's with these backbenchers — influenced by corporate cash and untethered from scientific fact — that Dayton must negotiate. Daudt and Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka might actually want what's best for the state. But they're bound by the even-farther-right, the “watch it burn” caucus, who act as if they wish the state government would just go out of business.

Faced with this prospect, it's no wonder Dayton seems sad and lonely. This is not how he pictured the twilight years of his public service.

Buck up, Governor. After all these years, the people of Minnesota still like you. Remember that, and remind them why. **EM**

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SÉBASTIEN THIBAUT

A CONSULTANT SINKS ITS TALONS INTO PRIOR LAKE. FOR VERY BIG MONEY.

BY CORY ZUROWSKI

THE SOCCER MOM glared at the single mother, leaving nothing to interpretation. By day, Stacey Ruelle worked a desk job at the Prior Lake Soccer Club. By night, she chaired the Prior Lake-Savage school board.

Melissa Enger, the single mom of three and Ruelle's board colleague, sat four seats removed, yet the chairwoman's vexation could be felt a county away on this October night.

Enger was explaining her nagging unease with Nexus Solutions, a one-stop construction services shop specializing in consulting,

planning, and building.

Prior Lake schools had paid the company a king's ransom. While overseeing about \$35 million worth of various upgrades and renovations, Nexus had collected close to \$9 million in fees and bonuses.

Paying a middleman that much didn't make sense to Enger, the board's fiscal hawk. She wanted Nexus' contract re-evaluated by lawyers. In writing.

Her request seemed innocuous enough. Prior Lake had serious growing pains. To accommodate swelling enrollment, the district was asking residents for upward of \$150 million to build more classrooms, modernize technology, and upgrade athletic facilities.

According to Julie Cink, the schools' business director, that meant the district was on the hook to Nexus for in excess of \$10 million if voters finally approved the referendum. Enger wanted to make sure there weren't any surprises.

"I'm not an attorney, and none of us have

that background in construction," she said. "As a board, we have nothing to lose, but everything to gain from getting a legal opinion.... Let's do it right."

Ruelle looked up from behind her glasses, her chin still pointed south.

Not happening, she said. We've already gotten the verbal okay from lawyers.

"We're not changing the contract tonight," added vice chairman Todd Sorensen. "We're bound by the contract...."

Enger slumped. Some nerve she had publicly defying majority wisdom.

"At this point we need to move on," Ruelle chided. "...I don't understand why we're still discussing this."

Enger, she said, was merely working "a delay tactic."

Perhaps. But for good reason. Consummated without public explanation and defended with impunity, the Nexus deal is a case study of how consultants find gold in Minnesota's schools.



GALEN FLETCHER

Shake your moneymaker

Elinor Burkett's 2002 book, *Another Planet: A Year in the Life of a Suburban High School*, chronicled Prior Lake's pride and insecurities, depicting it as both beautiful and flawed. The book illuminated youth as king, providing an intimate portal into those charged with shaping young people for what comes after

Six new gyms at Prior Lake High School were among the district's 100-plus needs that voters shot down in last spring's funding referendum.

four years of pep rallies and lunchroom cliques.

What's irrefutably changed since that account is that Prior Lake has officially

arrived. Today, dreamers, breeders, and anglers come in the southwestern suburb, its 30,000 residents triple the population of 1990.

About 7,800 kids attend Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools, 2,500 of whom make its high school one of Minnesota's largest and most crowded. The building, opened in 2003, was intended to accommodate 2,000.

The district has also become an open enrollment destination. At Glendale Elementary, one-third of the kids come from outside of Prior Lake and Savage.

At the same time the high school makes *Newsweek's* top schools list, Lakers' sports teams smell of victory. The girls volleyball team made the state tournament again after finishing runner-up in 2015. The case can be made that last year's boys hockey team, which lost in the section final, was the best high school team in Minnesota.

"Prior Lake very much sees itself as the next Eden Prairie," says longtime resident Joe Mannelly. "It wants to have this reputation of the best public schools as well as the athletic facilities that support the best sports programs."

To those aims, Prior Lake summoned outside help in 2012. The plan would involve three phases: evaluating its needs, modernizing existing buildings, and building new classrooms, athletic facilities, and

perhaps schools.

While it would require one of the largest school funding referendums in recent state history, its situation wasn't unique.

The business of public education has spawned a specialized kind of vendor. They're called construction services managers. They serve as consultants, assessing facilities operations and planning for future needs.

But these companies don't just consult. They parlay their expertise into managing the very work they say is needed, providing incentive for them to urge as much building as possible. They oversee refurbishments and new construction from planning to completion, collecting fees with each move.

Some districts separate consulting from construction management. In 2010, Wayzata summoned public bids to assess its facilities. Nine firms applied, with Wold Architects and Engineers securing the \$78,000 contract.

Wold would later earn Wayzata's architectural and engineering work, but the firm had to reapply for that job. Kraus-Anderson would score the construction manager contract.

By contrast, Prior Lake seemed to do as little as possible to protect its money.

Instead of putting out a public request for consulting proposals, the district used word-of-mouth, admits business director

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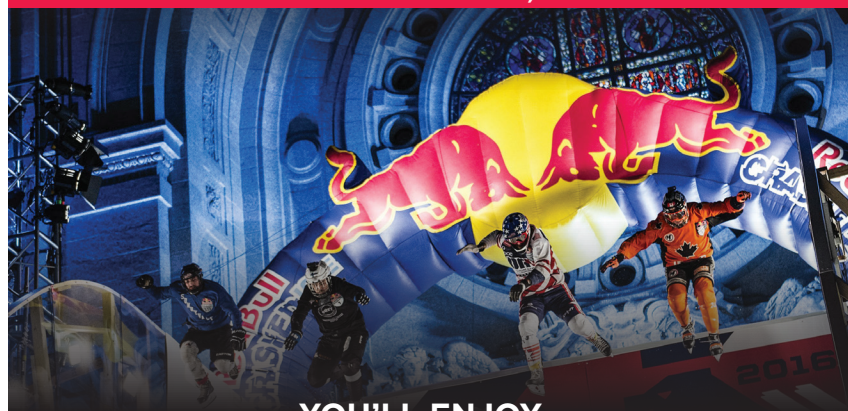
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Julie Cink.

ICS Consulting of Blaine had other public school clients, including Shakopee, Fairmont, and Pequot Lakes. It offered to evaluate Prior Lake for a lump sum not to exceed \$19,000.

The company also proposed to take on the role of “program manager,” overseeing everything from engineering to construction. It again pitched a lump fee based on the total budget, which would later be estimated to fall somewhere between \$3 and \$5 million.

There are advantages to having one firm handle both roles. The upside is cohesion from start to finish. But the risk is an incentive to increase costs.

Nexus wasn’t officially a company in the spring of 2012. It wouldn’t register with the Minnesota Secretary of State until June.

Its principals, Michael David and Brent Jones, had parted ways with their longtime employer, Johnson Controls, where they amassed decades of experience in energy use and facilities management. They’d been part of Johnson’s team overseeing Duluth’s ambitious school plan.

By all accounts, the \$315 million project on the North Shore was a show. Duluth needed to slim its existing buildings, renovate others, and build anew. The result, according to projections, would be stable financial footing by way of \$122 million

in savings over 18 years.

Johnson’s promises of savings fell woefully short. They were compounded by budget overruns, increased fees, and money for unbudgeted expenses like temporary heating and additional personnel.

What was originally a \$296 million plan ballooned by \$19 million.

But Duluth’s pain proved Johnson’s gain. According to the district’s director of business services, Johnson received almost \$57 million for its work — with nearly \$45 million coming in various fees.

“Our schools were supposed to be in good shape for decades, is how it was presented by Johnson Controls and the people supporting the plan,” says Sharla Gardner, a former Duluth city councilwoman.

“If it was possible to do again, I know there’s no way, no way at all, the community would choose the same. The new buildings are nice, I will say that. But at what cost? It hasn’t been worth the dollars or the harm it’s done.”

Duluth’s lessons would be lost 220 miles to the south.

No one seems willing to say how Nexus discovered Prior Lake, or vice versa. What is known is that Nexus pitched itself as the total package. For \$95,000, the company would assess Prior Lake’s needs.

The bid came in at \$76,000 more than ICS’. It also came with the “understand-

ing” that Nexus would also be contracted “for all professional services required to implement this work.”

In other words, ICS had offered a \$19,000 first date. Nexus was proposing a multimillion-dollar marriage, with a lot more strings attached.

Nexus also pitched fees seemingly well above what other districts were paying. Architectural services came in at almost 8 percent. Engineering, close to 9 percent. Construction management, nearly 6 percent.

Compare these with what Wayzata schools paid. In 2014, voters approved a \$109 million building and technology funding referendum. According to Finance Director Jim Westrum, Wold Architects and Engineers fixed fees averaged out to be about 6.5 percent. Kraus-Anderson, the construction services manager, earned slightly more than 2 percent. It also agreed to a cap “for site services and fees” that wouldn’t “exceed \$2,120,205.”

Edina found cheaper work as well. It paid Kraus-Anderson less than a 1.5 percent construction management fee for its recent referendum work, according to an email obtained by City Pages from Margo Bauck, director of business services.

But just weeks after signing up with the secretary of state, Nexus landed the Prior Lake job.

The middleman taketh

Then-Superintendent Sue Ann Gruver would explain the decision in an email that, according to business chief Cink, was sent to members of the school board.

Yes, Nexus was more expensive, admitted Gruver, but its plan took a “fresh, holistic look at our district.”

ICS wanted to partner with the district when picking designers and outsourcing contractors. On the other hand, Nexus’ “in-house engineering team has an excellent reputation,” she said, adding that “their approach provides us with sole source accountability.”

There was an added bonus, according to Gruver. From energy usage to copying costs, Nexus would conduct a comprehensive audit. This, she said, “would help us make better use of taxpayer dollars” by identifying waste.

(Messages left for Gruver were not returned. Neither David nor Jones responded to repeated interview requests.)

Ruelle was sold. Though Nexus was a new company, its leaders had decades of expertise doing this very work.

Yes, there were rumblings about Johnson’s work in Duluth. But Ruelle wasn’t particularly curious. “I didn’t go into the details or anything,” she says. She felt com-



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fortable with the firm's pitch of one-stop accountability.

"The idea of having one company that's responsible for everything made good business sense." It would also prove expensive. Nexus was allowed to tack a 10 percent fee on top of its reimbursable expenses, be they for postage or office supplies.

Later that year, the parties entered another agreement that would also pay Nexus for various energy, operational, and maintenance savings it said the district would achieve.

Company projections said this would amount to \$3.8 million over 15 years. Yet most of those savings would be devoured by Nexus' performance bonuses. And the company would begin to collect these payouts before the savings even became reality. By last year, they had already amounted to \$3.2 million, according to Cink.

All told over the past three years, Nexus has administered about \$35 million in projects, while collecting \$8.7 million in fees and bonuses.

Business in a vacuum

The third and most lucrative leg of Prior Lake's plan was unveiled to the public a year ago. The district had tallied its list of needs — aided in no small way by Nexus' advice. The tab came to \$150 million.

The 100-plus item roster included 12 school additions, a second-to-none robotics lab, six new high school gyms, and a new elementary school.

Ruelle was a fan.

"It was based on where we were at and where we needed to be over the next 10 years," she says.

Ruelle's enthusiasm wasn't totally shared. Mannelly, who moved from Eden Prairie 16 years ago, got sticker shock from the price of the new elementary school.

School board member Melissa Enger has often stood alone in questioning the wisdom of the district's contract with Nexus Solutions.

He was among those soon pointing out that Redtail Ridge Elementary, built four years earlier, cost 30 percent less.

"I asked why it was going to be so much more expensive," says Mannelly. "I was told by Julie Cink construction costs were higher."

"She said she'd been told construction materials had gone up 15 percent every year."

But that figure seems inflated. According to a construction cost index compiled by Mortenson Construction, a Golden Valley contractor whose projects have included U.S. Bank Stadium and Target Field, materials prices rose just 18 percent over a five-year period from 2011 through mid-2016.

As Mannelly was scratching his head, a group calling itself Citizens for Accountable Government was combing through Nexus' fees.

Its members caught wind of what the company had been paid and started asking questions. The queries were met with vague assurances that often turned into defensiveness when pressed, according to Accountable Government member John Diers.

"I was appalled when I found out about the contract," he says. "Here we have all this public money and nowhere does it seem is there any accountability."

Unfortunately, Prior Lake's problems were baked in at infancy.

Without open public bidding for the original consultant and management contract, "it becomes that much harder to know what kind of deal you're getting in the real world," says professor David Larson of Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

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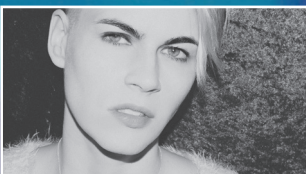
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that's going to be done, of course you have an incentive to provide the largest estimate possible."

Last spring some residents got out their

**"HERE WE HAVE
ALL THIS PUBLIC
MONEY AND
NOWHERE DOES IT
SEEM IS THERE ANY
ACCOUNTABILITY."**

calculators, trying to gauge what Nexus stood to collect. The contract's dizzying fee schedule and unbudgeted expenses only allowed for educated guesswork.

So they started with a number the school district provided: Nexus fees were estimated at 15 percent of the total budget. At \$150 million, that meant \$22.5 million.

"We found out what happened in Duluth and it didn't take us long to realize \$30 million, quite possibly more, was what Nexus might very well take in," says Diers. "When we asked for hard numbers, all we were told was Nexus fees were in line with industry standards."

School board vice-chair Sorensen was quick to dismiss their misgivings.

"If the referendum passes," he wrote in May 2016, "Nexus' professional fees would be significantly less than the \$30 million...."

In one correspondence, Sorensen also assured the group that "Nexus has a strong reputation... and their fees are in line with industry standards."

That doesn't jibe with Wayzata's experience. For the same kind of services, it added up to about 10.5 percent, according to business director Westrum.

And unlike in Prior Lake, Wayzata restricted payments for unbudgeted items to minor out-of-pocket expenses like printing and mileage — with no 10 percent tack-on for everything spent.

The gloves come off

In the weeks leading up to Prior Lake's \$150 million referendum last May, the district mailed literature asking, "What if the Referendum Does Not Pass?"

It warned of school boundary changes and raised the specter of safety because "we would not be able to improve security at all buildings."

At the high school, Superintendent Teri Staloch, who'd succeeded the retired Gruver, convened a seniors-only meeting. The group watched a district-produced video

emphasizing the referendum's import.

"This excellent and popular school district" needs more space for its students, technology for learning, and security for its buildings, the narrator says.

"When it's turned into an emotional argument, what gets neglected is the fiscal stewardship part," Diers says. "But that's what some people were wanting to turn it into. You were either for children or against."

The referendum failed by 457 votes.

"There was this myth that the people who don't have kids didn't want to support the referendum," says board member Enger. "That's an outright fallacy.... They knew we have to be smart and live within our means."

Enger had been the only member to vote against bringing the referendum to voters, saying she couldn't justify asking residents to pay for "125 different construction projects."

She would pay for her dissent.

Last summer, an accuser told district officials Enger had hosted a prom party where alcohol and marijuana were present.

The school board hired a law firm, which found the accusations baseless. It nonetheless cost taxpayers nearly \$8,000.

"I think anybody who has a party like that and something happens... would expect a full investigation," vice chairman Sorensen

told the Star Tribune.

Fellow board member Chad Rittenour, however, told the newspaper the matter reeked of "political shenanigans."

The episode left marks. Enger declined to discuss the investigation. She does say it was "easily one of the most awful things I've had to go through in my life."

"Over promise, under deliver"

As Prior Lake crafts plans for a second referendum, words of caution come from the northland.

Slipping enrollment and aging buildings moved St. Louis County schools to hire Johnson Controls in 2009. (The St. Louis school district is separate from Duluth's.) For \$300,000, the company would develop a game plan to keep the rural district solvent.

Covering 4,000 square miles, Minnesota's largest geographic district stretches from near Cloquet to the Canadian border, with 2,000 students.

"They didn't know exactly how Johnson Controls' strategic plan was going to come out, but I believe Johnson Controls certainly did," says Marshall Helmerger, publisher of the Timberjay, a weekly newspaper in Tower.

"Johnson Controls had incentive to lay

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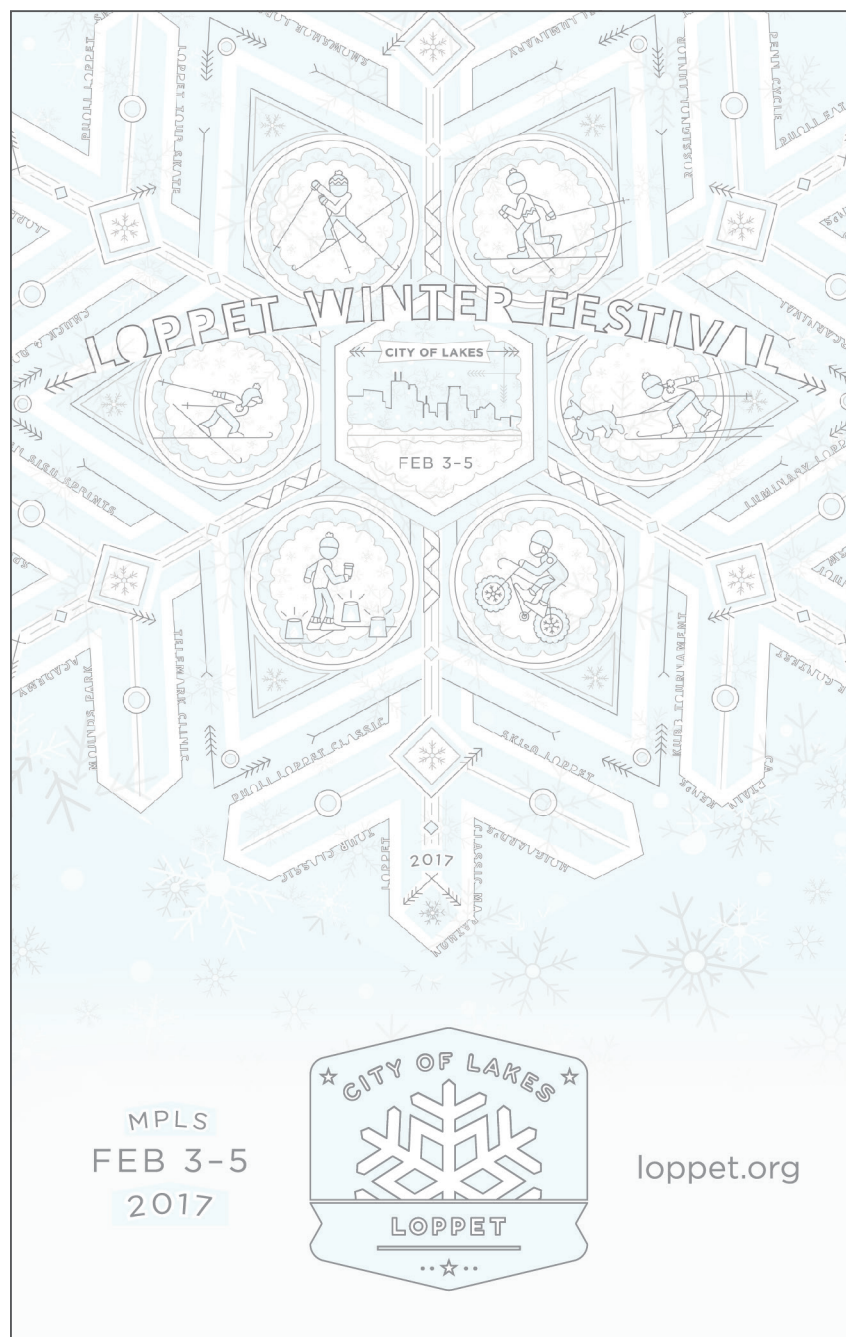
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out a scenario in which the bigger the issues the district had, the more the referendum would be," he says. "Because the higher the budget, the more money the company would make."

Johnson urged the district to modernize buildings and close five schools, replacing them with two regional ones. Consolidating operations, energy efficiency, and staff restructuring would produce surplus budgets, according to Johnson. To do nothing meant a \$4 million deficit within three years — and the risk of being dissolved by the state.

(Johnson spokesperson Ryan Nolan declined comment for this story.)

"We had a business manager working with them closely and a couple of school board members who were tight with Johnson Controls," Helmberger says. "They all came up with this scare tactic and these financial projections that were frightening. They put this information out there and said we can't recover without doing what Johnson Controls is proposing."

Voters approved funding for the \$80 million plan in 2009. Johnson would manage the project, with fees amounting to \$12 million.

Johnson warned us "we were going into dissolution," school board member Troy Johnson told Minnesota Public Radio in 2012. "It was the perfect situation for [Johnson Controls] to come in and basically make it a crisis, and they were going to get paid by how large the bond referendum is."

But the district's struggles weren't about to go away.

According to paperwork provided by Johnson, the district could expect more than \$5 million in savings. Three years later, officials were reporting a \$650,000 deficit in its \$21 million budget.

Two schools were closed, replaced by the new South Ridge School. Its energy bills came in at almost double those of the closed schools.

"Only later did we find out Johnson Controls' numbers, the numbers used to justify closing these schools, were bogus," says Helmberger. "It used, in some cases, information that was inaccurate. The projected savings were inflated and the new costs were understated. It was the classic case of over-promise, under-deliver."

His advice to Prior Lake: Tear up the contract and start over.

"They have to make sure they bring in a consultant to do strategic planning for your school district that can't have a vested interest in that planning effort," he says. "And whomever comes in to do that



GALEN FLETCHER

A persistent critic of the Prior Lake Schools/Nexus contract, John Diers of Citizens for Accountable Government wants to see the deal scrapped and the district start over.

work, they need to come into it knowing they're working for the school district and only for the school district, and not to pad their bottom line."

School of crock

Prior Lake business chief Julie Cink was recognized by the Association of Business Officials last year for "excellence, expertise, and transparency" in school finance and operations.

This may explain why she defends the district, saying, "Nothing illegal is going on.... I still don't know how we could have done this differently."

Meanwhile, the district's website featured a "Rumor Alert" page. The "Alert" page was recently replaced by an "FAQ" one, addressing "questions and rumors." Sorensen still doesn't understand what the fuss is about.

Nexus "has been a phenomenal company to work with [that's] actually saved the district money," he says.

Helmberger has heard all this before. Looking back at St. Louis County's experience, he fingers a confederacy of moneyed interests and individual egos that succeeded in deflecting questions and assuaging misgivings.

"When people questioned the school board and the business manager for what later turned out to be a really bad decision, they just dug in deeper," he says. "They weren't big enough people to admit they'd made a mistake." **CF**

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BY MECCA BOS

I first met Justin Sutherland deep in the basement kitchen bowels of Braserie Zentral, the Eastern European fine dining behemoth by Russell and Desta Klein that lived a short, brilliant life in downtown Minneapolis.

This was as close to a brigade kitchen as it gets around here. The crew was always in crisp, starched chef's whites, falling into militaristic rank, toiling in concentrated silence.

The last place I expected to find him after Zentral was running a Southern restaurant, smoking meat and folding Benton's bacon into macaroni and cheese. But Handsome Hog isn't the Southern restaurant of your imagination, and Sutherland's fine dining background isn't going to waste.

"I wanted to eat this food in a different

environment," he says. He's in a stocking cap and short-sleeved chef's shirt, relaxed as anything. "Without shit hanging off the walls and garbage can lids all over the place. [That's] fine, but I wanted something different."

His something different is a sleek, contemporary room in St. Paul's trendy Lowertown, where the menu zooms from Muffulettas to Cubanitos. A "meat bar" showcases an extravagant Mangalitsa ham, the pig equivalent of gold. Banana pudding takes on a modernist edge with buttermilk espuma.

Of course Southern food, soul food, and barbecue are all red hot right now, and have been for some years. When those foods get fancied up, they're subject to all manner of cultural commentary. Should French technique be applied to some of the most survivalist of American cooking traditions? Should biscuits and gravy be

tall-plated? Should they cost \$21? Should white folks be profiting off it?

Sutherland has a grandma from Mississippi, and another from Japan. His mom is white. His dad is African American. He identifies as his own thing. And like anyone growing up on fried chicken and collards, he found they stayed with him all throughout his adulthood and culinary education. Southern food is his first love, Japanese cooking his second, but when I push to get a categorization on Handsome Hog, the closest I get is "contemporary Southernish." Like Sutherland, Handsome Hog is its own thing.

Though he bristles at categorizing Handsome Hog as a barbecue joint, smoking is where the kitchen does its best work, and it is nice to eat such food in a room without a bunch of shit hanging off the walls. Sutherland won't describe the brisket as a house specialty, but I will.

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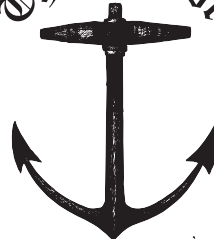
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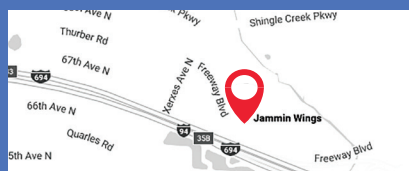


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pickled Fresno chiles



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into squishy buns and served with pickles and a housemade jalapeño sauce hot enough to make you jump out of your chair. These are the very essence of soul food: using what's left to make something brilliant.

My biggest problem with Handsome Hog is that there's nearly too much to contend with on its menu. In their effort to evade definition, I fear that they do just that. A blue cheese wedge salad, while properly executed, can be had anywhere. A "BBQ Chopped Salad" is a strange amalgam of kitchen-sink ingredients from black-eyed peas to grilled corn to grape tomatoes. And while they do chicken and waffles with expert grace, I'd like that once distinctive, now overdone dish to die a quiet death. Even White Castle is onto it.

When pork shankosso buco or a whole fried snapper gets invited to the party, things start to get a little weird. It's like too much memorabilia on the walls; the magic spell of a truly great restaurant starts to get a bit muddled.

Besides, easy sellers like chicken and waffles obscure the flashes of often dazzling cooking here. The smoked cioppino with an ocean of seafood and smoked tomato broth sets an elegant, understated tone for future courses. A sausage gravy poutine boasts big, meaty batons of potato that stand up to the bombardment of cheesy, curdy gravy. Pickled Fresno chiles cut through the fat like a firecracker through muggy July air.

For sheer drama, turn to the pork Porterhouse, where a bludgeon of pig rests over juicy braised cabbage, apple,

and Cipollini onion, all of it doused in bourbon-infused sorghum and mustard butter. It's dinner turned dessert and a meat treat you won't soon forget.

As at any truly good Southernish place, you can make a joyful, freewheeling meal out of the sides section. Sutherland's grandma's greens, mile-high flaky biscuits, and a cucumber salad that's a nod to any Minnesota kid's picnic table — I could die happy with these and little else. Well, these,

and any selection from HH's "Brown Bible" where a hundred labels of bourbon, whiskey, rye, and Scotch are treated with high reverence. Order a house Manhattan or a Vieux Carré with tobacco and Benedictine for smooth drinking proof.

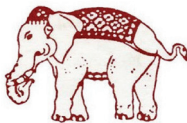
Much of the thrill of eating "next generation" cooking is finding out what the kids will do next. Purity in food

cuts both ways. We all love a classic, but we've all had those classics before. When a young, black-Japanese-white guy with a French cooking background opens up a contemporary Southernish place, it's cause to perk up and take notice.

When Sutherland offers a taste from a pot of gumbo he's been working long and hard on, I perk up again. The roux is dark, chocolate brown, and he says it takes an hour and a half to get that way. "Gumbo is so easy, yet so easy to mess up," he says. It's true. You can scarcely get a decent bowl in this town. Sutherland's is a work in progress, and it won't go on the menu until he gets it just right.

Mastering the classics, then refusing to be confined by them. It's the age-old path to greatness. We'll be watching. 

**You can
make a joyful,
freewheeling
meal out of
the sides
section.**



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A LIST

SATURDAY Wander North drinks to *Archer* P. 28

SUNDAY Dioramas made by adults at Sisyphus Brewing P. 31

WEDNESDAY 1.25

COMEDY

RUBEN PAUL

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

Comedian Ruben Paul has been quite the globe-trotter, featuring for Russell Peters in shows overseas while also being invited back to some of those countries to headline in his own right. "I think that it has influenced my comedy," he says of the international performances, "because when you travel to other countries, you're experiencing all these things and you're learning all these things and it's exciting and new." He returns to the U.S. invigorated. "I get up onstage and I want to share those things about navigating through these different countries and learning about different cultures, food, and religion — whatever it might be." American audiences, he notes, get to experience these places through his comedy. "It made me a better comic, and it made me a better person," he insists. "It made me a more educated person because I think traveling is a good education. I think that fish-out-of-water perspective translates all over the world." 18+; 21+ later shows. 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 9:30 p.m. Sunday. \$13-\$22. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday** —P.F. WILSON

THURSDAY 1.26

FESTIVAL

2017 SAINT PAUL WINTER CARNIVAL

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Minnesotans might complain among one another of the frigid winter months, but the same arctic conditions often serve as a source of pride, as exemplified by the Saint Paul Winter Carnival. Centered in Rice Park, the traditional site of the festival's signature ice palace and surrounding sculptures, the event has grown to encompass much of our capital city. At the State Fairgrounds, revelers can partake in the Beer Dabbler tasting featuring libations from over 120

Five artists explore female strength and beauty in "Valure."



WUNROW, DON'T CUT SHE'S STILL ALIVE

brewers. For family-friendly activities, the Fairgrounds will also offer competitively judged snow sculptures, sledding hills, and a Polar Plunge into icy waters. Those seeking the thrill of competition can head to Como Park for 28 frozen holes of disc golf at the Gotta Go Gotta Throw Ice Bowl, or sprint through downtown with the Securian Winter Run. While other activities abound, including the technological innovations of the

Autonomous Snowplow Competition and the ever adorable Saintly City Cat Show, nothing is as closely associated with the carnival as the three mainstay parades: Moon Glow Pedestrian, King Boreas Grand Day, and Vulcan Victory Torchlight. However one partakes, the Saint Paul Winter Carnival offers ample reasons to forgo the complaints and actually enjoy our prolonged months of ice and snow. For complete prices

and event schedules, see the official website, www.wintercarnival.com, or call the hotline at 651-223-7400.

Through February 5 —BRAD RICHASON

SPORTS

U.S. POND HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP

LAKE NOKOMIS

For this epic tournament, athletes often take to the ice during some of the coldest days of the year in hopes of winning the Golden Shovel. On the way to the final battle, many teams will square off in divisions including co-ed, women's, 40-plus, and rink rat. The most competitive players can be found in open division, where it's not uncommon to find a former pro or college athlete. While teams of eight duke it out, revelers can practice their moves on a public rink open to all ages, relax in the beer garden, and warm up in a heated tent serving eats and hot beverages. For complete game schedules, see the official U.S. Pond Hockey website, www.uspondhockey.com. 5 to 9 p.m. Thursday; 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday; 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Saturday; 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. Free. 5001 Lake Nokomis Pkwy. W., Minneapolis. **Through Sunday** —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

FRIDAY 1.27

THEATER

PROMISE LAND

GUTHRIE THEATER

In 2015, when the producing directors of the Illusion Theater, Bonnie Morris and Michael Robins, were given the opportunity by the National Theatre Conference to name an Outstanding Emerging Artist, the pair chose another local duo, Diogo Lopes and Isabel Nelson of Transatlantic Love Affair. To anyone paying attention to local theater, the honor shouldn't have come as a surprise. Since the company's inception, Transatlantic Love Affair has forged a singular path with spellbinding storytelling realized through deftly choreographed physicality. Strikingly

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 ►

THE MAINROOM

BEST CONCERT VENUE, BEST CONCERT, BEST CONCERT (TOURING), BEST CLUB DJ - City Pages 2016

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1



FRIDAY, MARCH 10



FRIDAY, JANUARY 27



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16



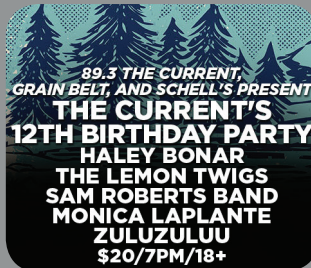
FRIDAY, MARCH 3



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15



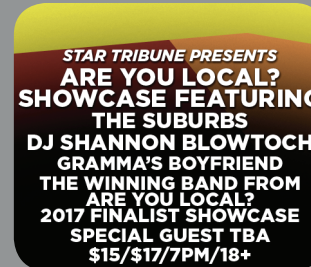
SATURDAY, JANUARY 28



MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17



SUNDAY, MARCH 5



THURSDAY, MARCH 16



SUNDAY, JANUARY 29



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24



MONDAY, MARCH 6



FRIDAY, MARCH 17



MONDAY, JANUARY 30



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25



THURSDAY, MARCH 9



SATURDAY, MARCH 18



ALSO COMING TO THE MAINROOM

- 3/21 **ANDREW MCMAHON IN THE WILDERNESS** w/ ATLAS GENIUS, NIGHT RIOTS 18+
3/23 **RAILROAD EARTH - WINTER TOUR 2017** w/ BILLY STRINGS 18+
3/24 **GALACTIC - WINTER TOUR** w/ THE HIP ABDUCTION 18+
3/29 **SON VOLT** w/ ANDERS PARKER 18+
3/31 **HIGHLY SUSPECT** w/ DJ REDBEES 18+
4/02 **FOXYGEN** 18+
4/08 **MARGO PRICE** w/ COLTER WALL 18+
4/17 **THE ZOMBIES - 'ODESSEY AND ORACLE'** 50TH ANNIVERSARY w/ DJ JAKE RUDH (TRANSMISSION) 18+
4/18 **THE NEW PORNOGRAPHERS** w/ WAXAHATCHEE 18+
4/19 **SLEEP** w/ MONO 18+
4/20 **MAYDAY PARADE - A LESSON IN ROMANTICS 10TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR** w/ KNUCKLE PUCK, MILESTONES ALL AGES
4/29 **AMERICAN FOOTBALL** w/ S. CAREY, AERO FLYNN 18+
5/01 & 02 **VULFPECK** 18+
5/03 **TESTAMENT** w/ SEPULTURA, PRONG 18+
5/05 **LAURA MARLING** 18+
5/06 **GEAR DADDIES** w/ SAM LLANAS (FORMERLY OF BODE ANS) 18+
5/13 **COHEED AND CAMBRIA - "NEVERENDER GAIBSIV"** w/ THE DEAR HUNTER 18+
5/21 **BONOBO** 18+

7TH ST ENTRY

- 1/25 **TRUCKFIGHTERS** w/ KINGS DESTROY 18+
1/26 **BLINDS 'SOME THING FOR NO THING' EP RELEASE SHOW** w/ AHM, PRIVATE INTERESTS 18+
1/28 **HOLLERADO** w/ SAVOY MOTEL, SLEEP STUDY 18+
1/29 **ILLISM 'DEFINITION OF ILL: B SIDE' ALBUM RELEASE PARTY** w/ JAY HOLLYWOOD, DJ DIME 18+
1/30 **DREAM OF THE WILD AND MMYKK** w/ NO GOOD NEIGHBORS 18+
1/31 **CHERRY GLAZER** w/ SLOW HOLLOWES 18+
2/01 **FUNK DIMENSIONS: A DANCE NIGHT CELEBRATING FUNK IN ALL ITS FORMS FT. DJ ESPADA AND MIKE 2600** 18+
2/03 **KEVIN GARRETT: THE FALSE HOPE TOUR** w/ A R I Z O N A 18+
2/04 **GIBBZ - OH MY GOD TOUR 2017** 18+
2/06 **LEMURIA** w/ CAYETANA, MIKEY ERG 18+
2/07 **SUSTO 'I'M FINE TODAY' TOUR** w/ CEREUS BRIGHT 18+
2/08 **YONAS THE ROLL ONE UP TOUR** w/ JUSTICE MONEY, KEE, CHANCE YORK AND ERIC MAYSON 18+
2/09 **MEAT WAVE** w/ ABSOLUTELY NOT, BUILDINGS 18+

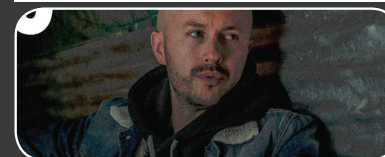
TURF CLUB

- 1/25 **ANDREW BRODER & PEOPLE RESIDENCY FOR MUSIC & ACTION** w/ GREG GREASE, DJ JUST NINE, MIKE 2600, PSYMN, LADY MIDNIGHT, C. KOSTRA, DEVATA DAUN 21+
1/26 **ALCEST** w/ THE BODY, CREEPERS 21+
1/27 **PORNO WOLVES, THE PERSON & THE PEOPLE, AND THE MODERN ERA** 21+
1/28 **JOE HYSSELL "WORKIN' TOO HARD" EP RELEASE SHOW** w/ THE RAMBLIN' MERCENARIES, DAN NEALE, SPECIAL GUESTS 21+
1/29 **CHARLIE PARR** w/ FEEDING LEROY 21+
2/02 **THE CONFUSED BROTHERS BAND CD RELEASE SHOW** w/ BENEATH THE CROW, LUCID VANGUARD 21+
2/03 **RICH MATTSON AND THE NORTHSTARS** w/ WHALE IN THE THAMES, FEEDING LEROY 21+
2/04 **WILLIAM ELLIOTT WHITMORE** w/ WILL VARLEY, GABRIEL DOUGLAS 21+

UPCOMING SHOWS AT OTHER VENUES



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25
BEAR'S DEN
w/ GILL LANDRY
at FINE LINE
\$18/\$20/7PM/18+



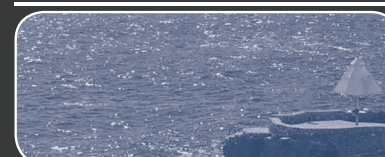
SATURDAY, JANUARY 28
WAX TAILOR
w/ L'ORANGE
at FINE LINE
\$15/\$18/8PM/18+



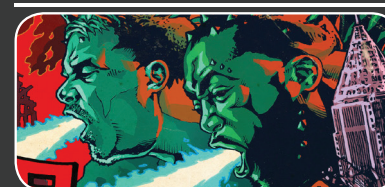
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3
First Avenue, Jam, City Pages, and 89.3 The Current present
AN EVENING WITH DAWES
at STATE THEATRE
\$36/7PM/ALL AGES



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8
SAFETYSUIT
w/ ROYAL TEETH
at FINE LINE
\$20/\$35 RESERVED BALCONY
7PM/18+



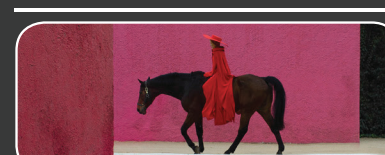
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11
CLOUD NOTHINGS
w/ MOON BROS.
at FINE LINE
\$16/\$18/\$30 RESERVED BALCONY
8PM/18+



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14
89.3 The Current presents
RUN THE JEWELS
RUN THE WORLD TOUR
w/ THE GASLAMP KILLER, GANGSTA BOO, NICK HOOK, CUZ
at MYTH NIGHTCLUB
\$30/\$35/7PM/ALL AGES



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16
AN EVENING WITH MICHAEL IAN BLACK
at THE CEDAR
\$25/7PM/ALL AGES



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17
AUSTRA
w/ THE RANGE
at TRIPLE ROCK
\$16/\$18/8PM/18+



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17
LILY & MADELEINE
at BRYANT LAKE BOWL
\$16/6PM/ALL AGES

- 2/18 **DEAD MAN WINTER** w/ GLEN'S NEIGHBOR at Pizza Luce (Duluth, MN)
2/23 **NOSLEEP PODCAST** at The Cedar
2/24 **THUNDERCAT** at Fine Line
2/25 **PROF** w/ FINDING NOVYON, METASOTA, WILLIE WONKA at Clyde Iron Works (Duluth, MN)
2/27 **THE JAPANESE HOUSE** at Triple Rock
2/28 **ELECTRIC GUEST** w/ NINE POUND SHADOW at Triple Rock
3/01 **LOS CAMPESINOS!** w/ CRYING at Triple Rock
3/03 **THE RADIO DEPT.** w/ GERMANS at Triple Rock
3/05 **DEVENDRA BANHART** at Fine Line

FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON PERFORMERS AND COMPLETE SHOW LISTINGS VISIT FIRST-AVENUE.COM
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A-LIST



Ragamala brings traditional moves into the present.

BRUCE W. PALMER

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

designed, each of the company's seven previous works has proven to be a provocative highlight of the Twin Cities theater scene: *Ballad of the Pale Fisherman*, *Red Resurrected*, *Ash Land*, *These Old Shoes*, *Solitaire*, *105 Proof*; or, *The Killing of Mack* "The Silencer" Klein, and *Emile/Eurydice*. Though each work has been stylistically varied, all seven are unified by the guiding sensibilities of creators Lopes and Nelson. Considering this acclaimed background, the group's latest work, *Promise Land*, comes with lofty expectations. An invigorating reimagining of *Hansel and Gretel*, *Promise Land* looks to transcend fairy-tale origins to parallel real-world immigration experiences. Originally conceived by Lopes and fleshed out by contributions from the ensemble cast, the emotionally rich production should once again validate widespread acclaim (including being named Best Theater Troupe by City Pages) for the always passionate overtures of Transatlantic Love Affair. 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays; 1 p.m. Sundays. \$9. 818 S. Second St., Minneapolis; 612-377-2224. **Through February 12 —BRAD RICHASON**

ART/GALLERY VALURE

GAMUT GALLERY

Five artists — all of them women — have contributed arresting imagery to this exhibition that defies traditional, patriarchal conventions of female beauty and usefulness. In Bethany Birnier's photography, for example, glamour and taxidermy are juxtaposed to underscore just how ephemeral beauty can be. In her work, Bunny Portia draws from her experiences as a Playboy Bunny in the 1970s to illuminate, via

a transformative sort of x-ray vision, a similar memento-mori sensibility. In Caitlin Karolczak, Jane Wunrow, and Serah Sauser's pieces, figures and faces are disassembled and recast in acts of metamorphosis that refract notions of female physicality and identity. There will be an opening reception from 7 to 11 p.m. Friday, January 27, featuring live music by Aimerie. A closing reception at 7 p.m. Friday, February 17 will feature an original dance performance piece from Ghostbridge Theatre. Free; \$5 opening reception; \$10 closing reception. 717 S. 10th St., Minneapolis; 612-367-4327.

Through February 17 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

DANCE

RAGAMALA DANCE COMPANY: WRITTEN IN WATER

THE COWLES CENTER FOR DANCE
& THE PERFORMING ARTS

Ragamala Dance takes bharatanatyam, a 2,000-year-old South Indian dance form originally performed in Hindu temples, into the realm of total theater. This internationally acclaimed company's latest work, *Written in Water*, unites the Indian board game Paramapadam, an early version of Snakes and Ladders, with the 12th-century Sufi poem "The Conference of the Birds," which details a journey to attain enlightenment. To parallel the game's theme of the unpredictable aspects of life, the splendid Ragamala dancers have incorporated improvisation into their highly codified movement. Large-scale projections of original paintings by Chennai-based visual artist Keshav and Minneapolis artist Nathan Christopher, and a score played live that threads traditional South Indian music with jazz trumpet, create an environment both sensuous and contemplative. 8 p.m. Friday and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 ►

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LAURA MARLING
FIRST AVENUE · 5/05/2017
\$25 / 8PM DOORS / 18+ | ON SALE NOW

PALACE THEATRE ST. PAUL



GREENSKY BLUEGRASS
SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2017
\$20/\$25 DOS / 7PM DOORS / 18+ | ON SALE 1.27 AT 1PM



TYCHO
THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2017
\$29.50 / 7:30PM DOORS / 18+ | ON SALE 1.27 AT 10AM



SLOWDIVE
TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2017
\$25/\$30 DOS | \$40 RESERVED LOGE/\$45 DOS
7PM DOORS / 18+ | ON SALE 1.27 AT 11AM

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THE CADILLAC THREE:
THE BLACK ROSES TOUR
JAN. 26



CABOOZE & LIVE NATION PRESENT
LED ZEPPELIN 2
JAN. 27



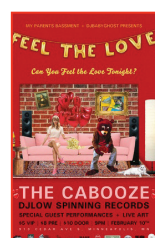
CABOOZE & FIRST FLEET PRESENT
TALIB KWELI
w/ STYLES P,
& K'VALENTINE
FEB. 1



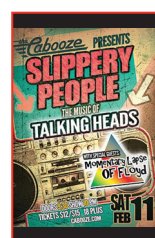
CABOOZE & MIDAMERICA PRESENT
BOB MARLEY REMEMBERED
25TH ANNUAL SONGS OF FREEDOM
FEB. 3-4



CABOOZE & THE NOISE PRESENT
POP EVIL
FEB. 9



CABOOZE & MY PARENTS BASEMENT PRESENT
FEEL THE LOVE
w/ DJ LOW
FEB. 10



THE MUSIC OF THE TALKING HEADS SLIPPERY PEOPLE
w/ MOMENTARY LAPSE OF FLOYD
FEB. 11

UPCOMING

- 1/28** LEOPRESENTS.COM **The Suit 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY TOUR**
2/8 **Dave Sandersfeld CD Release Show!** w/ JAY SMART, & TOM AYDAN
2/11 EARLY LEOPRESENTS.COM **Lordi 25 YEAR ANNIVERSARY MONSTOUR**
2/13 LEOPRESENTS.COM **Lacey Sturm w/ PALISADES, STITCHED UP HEART, & MORE!**
2/16 FREEMINDS & CLM PRESENT **Death of My Teenage** w/ ROBB BANKS, DASH, & MORE!
2/17 LEOPRESENTS.COM **Born of Osiris THE NEW REIGN TOUR - FEAT. VOLUMES & MORE!**
2/18 LEOPRESENTS.COM **Overkill w/ NILE**
2/24 **"Grass & Brass"** w/ KIND COUNTRY, & NEW SOUND UNDERGROUND
3/4 **The Menzingers w/ JEFF ROSENSTOCK, & ROZWELL KID**
3/25 **Cody Canada and the Departed w/ RADIO BIRDS**
3/29 CABOOZE & IN PRESENT **Senses Fail w/ COUNTERPARTS, MOVEMENTS, & LIKE PACIFIC**
3/30 **The Rumours Album Release Tour w/ ONCE AROUND, & THE VON TRAMPS**
4/8 JF MUSIC PRESENTS **Stevie Ray Vaughan Tribute Show w/ SPECIAL GUESTS!**

TICKET OUTLETS

THE JOINT BAR, ELECTRIC FETUS, DOWN IN THE VALLEY, DISCLAND,
KNOW NAME RECORDS, MILL CITY SOUND, ECLIPSE RECORDS

A-LIST

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

Saturday; 2 p.m. Sunday. \$29. 528 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-206-3636. **Through Sunday** —LINDA SHAPIRO

ART/GALLERY

ROGER SHIMOMURA: MISTAKEN IDENTITY

MACALESTER COLLEGE
JANET WALLACE FINE ARTS CENTER

In this dynamic exhibition, presented in collaboration with the Twin Cities Japanese American Citizens League, Roger Shimomura's works on paper from the past 25 years vividly address

issues of racial exclusion (the artist and his family were incarcerated at the Minidoka Relocation Center in Idaho during World War II). Sadly, the show couldn't be more timely given the new administration's views on immigration and race. That's why viewing Shimomura's graphic novel-style images, which serve to illuminate the absurdity of stereotypes and racial misconceptions by juxtaposing American pop culture with Japanese iconography, remind and rally viewers for the challenges ahead. There will be an opening reception from 7 to 9 p.m. Friday, January 27. 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul; 651-696-6000.

Through March 10 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

THEATER

CELLULA

IN THE HEART OF THE BEAST
PUPPET AND MASK THEATRE

Biological science meets the art of the bedtime story in *Cellula*. Co-produced by HOBt and Puppets Rosenschnoz, the production employs blacklight puppetry and live acapella music, courtesy of improv vocalists Mankwe Ndosi and Libby Turner, to explore the wonders of cell science. First presented as a 17-minute piece for HOBt's Puppet Lab series, the show is two years in the making, thanks in part to a number of grants, including one from the Jim Henson Foundation. *Cellula* features performers Shari Aronson and Chris Griffith, with direction from Kurt Hunter. Come for the Microscope Fun Gallery an hour before the show, where you can try your hand at both contemporary and vintage magnifying devices with the help of volunteers from the MN Microscopy Society, Mia, and Mill City Museum. 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. \$8-\$15; Saturday matinees are pay-what-you-can. All matinees are sensory-friendly. 1500 E. Lake St., Minneapolis; 612-721-2535.

Through February 5 —SHEILA REGAN

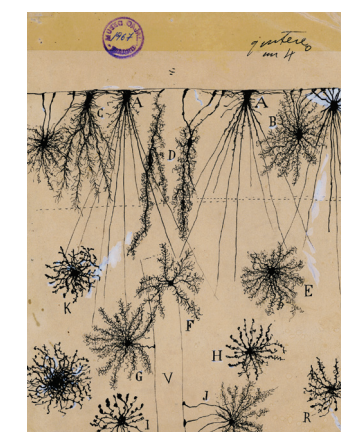
SATURDAY 1.28

ANIMALS

SAINTLY CITY CAT CLUB ANNUAL CHAMPIONSHIP CAT SHOW

ROY WILKINS AUDITORIUM

The Saint Paul Winter Carnival isn't just about celebrating winter sports and ice art. For years now the festival has also been all about cats. At the Saintly City Cat Club's Cat Show, 26 different breeds will preen, glare, and nap as they compete in five different classes, including the



COURTESY OF INSTITUTO CAJAL (CSIC)

ART/GALLERY

THE BEAUTIFUL BRAIN: THE DRAWINGS OF SANTIAGO RAMÓN Y CAJAL

FREDERICK R. WEISMAN
ART MUSEUM

As intricate as botanical illustrations and as finely detailed as human tissue viewed under a microscope, the drawings of Santiago Ramón y Cajal — the father of modern neuroscience — astound with their acute level of artistry and profound understanding of how the brain works. Cajal broke open the nascent field of brain science with the theory that the stuff within our noggins is made up of individual cells rather than a tangle of things. Organized in collaboration with neuroscientists at the University of Minnesota — one of whom, Dr. Alfonso Araque, worked at the Instituto Cajal in Madrid where the drawings are housed — the exhibition sheds light on Descartes' "I think, therefore I am." There will be an opening reception on Friday, January 27, from 7 to 10 p.m. 333 E. River Rd., Minneapolis; 612-625-9494. **Through May 21** —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 ►



Walter Chancellor

THURSDAY
2.2.17

8:00 PM
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H&B

FRIDAY
2.3.17

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
\$10 22 GSHARP & THE BIZNESS THE BEST BAND MONEY CAN BUY! DOORS AT 7PM EVENT ENDS AT 1AM	23 CLOSED	NO COVER 24 7 PM JUD HAILEY & THE NEW HARMONY ROCK, POP, COUNTRY	\$5 25 THE DIESELFITTERS SHANNON & BILLS ROCKABILLY SWING DANCE NIGHT DANCE LESSONS START AT 8PM	\$5 8 PM 26 TIM PATRICK A DYNAMIC SINATRA-STYLE SINGER WHO PERFORMS REGULARLY WITH HIS SWINGIN' BLUE EYES BAND.	\$7 27 R-FACTOR EVERYTHING FROM BIG BAND SWING TO ALL THE CURRENT HITS OF TODAY	\$7 28 RITUAL MADNESS PODCAST PRESENTS AN EVENING OF METAL SPONSORED BY PABST BLUE RIBBON
\$10 29 GSHARP & THE BIZNESS THE BEST BAND MONEY CAN BUY! DOORS AT 7PM, EVENT ENDS AT 1AM	30 CLOSED	NO COVER 31 7 PM JUD HAILEY & THE NEW HARMONY ROCK, POP, COUNTRY	\$5 FEB 1 BAD COMPANIONS SHANNON & BILLS ROCKABILLY SWING DANCE NIGHT DANCE LESSONS START AT 8PM	\$4 8 PM FEB 2 WALTER CHANCELLOR A TWIN CITIES JAZZ ICON	\$8 FEB 3 HOOKERS & BLOW HI-ENERGY ROCKIN' DANCE GROOVES FROM 60/70'S R&B AND POP HITS!	\$8 FEB 4 THRILLBILLIES UPBEAT, FUN, COUNTRY PARTY MUSIC FROM CASH TO CHURCH... AND MORE!
\$10 FEB 5 GSHARP & THE BIZNESS THE BEST BAND MONEY CAN BUY! DOORS AT 7PM EVENT ENDS AT 1AM	FEB 6 CLOSED	NO COVER FEB 7 7 PM JUD HAILEY & THE NEW HARMONY ROCK, POP, COUNTRY	\$5 FEB 8 MOONSHINE RHYTHM CLUB SHANNON & BILLS ROCKABILLY SWING DANCE NIGHT DANCE LESSONS START AT 8PM	\$4 7 PM FEB 9 DAN LUND & BUFFALOAF COUNTRY TWANG	\$5 8 PM FEB 10 FLANNEL MINNESOTA'S PREMIER 90'S COVER BAND	\$8 FEB 11 BURBILLIES BLUEGRASS VERSIONS OF 80'S HAIR METAL HITS!
\$10 FEB 12 GSHARP & THE BIZNESS THE BEST BAND MONEY CAN BUY! DOORS AT 7PM, EVENT ENDS AT 1AM	\$10 FEB 13 CLOSED	NO COVER FEB 14 7 PM JUD HAILEY & THE NEW HARMONY ROCK, POP, COUNTRY	\$5 FEB 15 THE BAD COMPANIONS SHANNON & BILLS ROCKABILLY SWING DANCE NIGHT DANCE LESSONS START AT 8PM	\$4 8 PM FEB 16 WALTER CHANCELLOR A TWIN CITIES JAZZ ICON	\$6 FEB 17 BLUEPRINT VINTAGE/CLASSIC COUNTRY SPONSORED BY BOB FM	\$8 FEB 18 GARY WEST FOR THE LOVE OF CASH CLASSIC COUNTRY MUSIC

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HAPPY HOUR TUESDAY - FRIDAY
4:30PM - 9 PM



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FOLLOW
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MARK OSTAPCHUK AT FORM + CONTENT

CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY ►

“Best Cat” in show. On Sunday, the Queen and King will be crowned — if they allow it. Leading up to that moment, guests will be able to meet a variety of exotic household cats, adorable tabbies, kittens, and other felines both friendly and fussy. Cat-tastic vendors will also be attendance, selling their wares, giving demonstrations, and sharing in the cat love. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. \$4; \$3 children and seniors. 175

W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul; 651-989-5151.
Through Sunday —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

BARHOPPING ARCHER COSTUME PARTY

WANDER NORTH DISTILLERY
Theme parties aren’t just for Halloween. This Saturday at Wander North, the bar will be paying tribute to FX’s *Archer*, an animated series that mashes global espionage, mid-century modern aesthetics, and dark humor together

for one fabulously bizarre — and good-looking — show. Come as you are, or come in costume, whether you’re a strong and hearty Pam, a bionic Barry, or a flaky Carol/Cheryl/Cherene. Costumes are encouraged and score you \$1 off drinks, which will include cocktails inspired by the hard-drinking characters. Have you ever wanted to try Archer’s Green Russian (absinthe, creme de menthe, vodka, and heavy whipping cream)? Well, now’s your chance. Costumes will be judged at 10 p.m., and awards will be given to those who best nailed their looks as either main or obscure characters (anyone up to go as Babou or Brett Bunson?). 8 p.m. to midnight. Free. 771 Harding St. NE, Minneapolis; 612-276-2189. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

ART FORM + CONTENT GALLERY’S 10TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

FORM + CONTENT GALLERY
A decade ago, Robyn Stoller Awend and Camille J. Gage initiated a process that would become the member-owned,

–curated, and –operated art gallery Form + Content. Since then, the organization has presented 85 exhibitions dealing, in large part, with critical social issues, including LGBTQ rights and identity politics, the housing crisis, Israeli/Palestinian conflicts, and the values and use of water. Perhaps no other Twin Cities gallery has so consistently and seamlessly merged socially engaged practice with artistic excellence. And the shows haven’t been limited to visual art. In 2011, the space was transformed into the Wee Cabaret, a performance venue. This celebratory exhibition will reunite the 30 artists who made the gallery a singular platform for artistic exploration and expression. There will be an opening reception Saturday, January 28, from 6 to 8 p.m. 210 N. Second St., #104, Minneapolis; 612-436-1151.
Through March 4 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

THEATER MIRANDA

ILLUSION THEATER
For the last 40 years, Illusion Theater has earned its spot as an essential presence in Twin Cities theater by

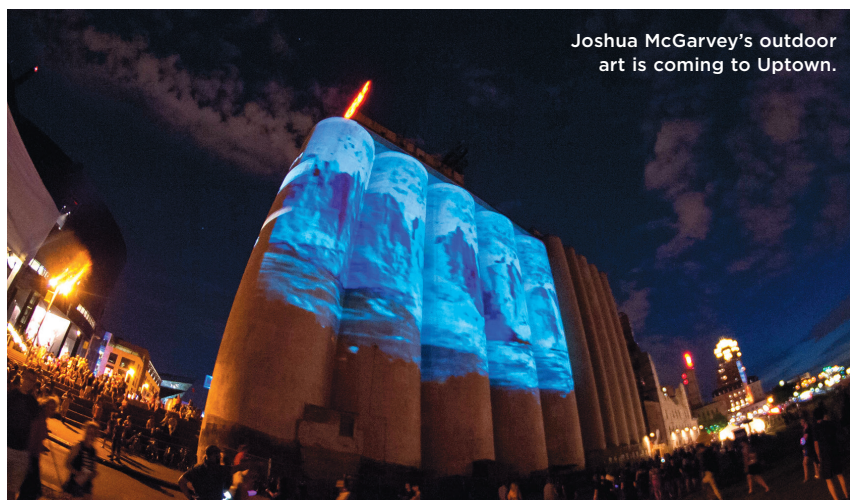
Question the WALL ITSELF

Rooms with a Viewpoint:
Question how space and our surroundings shape identity.

Now on view #AtTheWalker
walkerart.org

Question the Wall Itself is organized by the Walker Art Center. Major support for the exhibition is provided by the Prospect Creek Foundation, Elizabeth Redleaf, and Audrey and Zygi Wilf.

WALKER



Joshua McGarvey's outdoor art is coming to Uptown.

COURTESY OF EVENT ORGANIZERS

producing ambitious works that consistently reflect our evolving national character. In recognition of the company's esteemed history, Illusion was named an Outstanding Theater by the National Theatre Conference, and awarded a \$15,000 grant by the National Endowment for the Arts. True to form, Illusion's two producing directors, Michael Robins and Bonnie Morris, promptly applied the funds to the development of playwright James Still's *Miranda*. A three-time Pulitzer Prize-nominee, Still first previewed *Miranda* in 2014 as part of Illusion's Fresh Ink program, a showcase for works-in-progress. The premiere of the fully formed piece features the acclaimed Carolyn Pool as the title character, a CIA agent working undercover as the director of a youth theater company in Yemen. Grieving over a brother killed in the Twin Towers on 9/11, Miranda had hoped her assignment would provide clarity of purpose. Instead, she finds herself questioning both the mission and her motivations. Staged with an impressive ensemble cast (including Beth Gilleland, Delta Giordano, Steve Hendrickson, and Ricky Morisseau) under the direction of Robins, this production demonstrates Illusion Theater's drive to support innovative works. The show is in previews on Friday, 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays. \$25-\$38. 528 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-4944.

Through February 18 —BRAD RICHASON

SUNDAY 1.29

ADULTING

TRYORAMA: A DIORAMA FAIR FOR GROWN-UPS

SISYPHUS BREWING

Though solid diorama-making skills are crucial when you're a kid, they don't really pay off in the adult world. But they will this Sunday, as the

Grown-Up Club will be revisiting the art — shoebox, cotton balls, hot glue, and all. Any good diorama assignment has a theme; at this event participants will be creating pieces inspired by "American Lyfe: 50 Years in the Future." Will these be utopian or dystopian dioramas? You'll have to peek inside to find out. The stakes are high: First place takes home \$100. Winners will be judged by celebrity diorama experts (or just kinda locally known people who dig a good craft project), and beer will be plentiful. 1 to 4 p.m. Free. 712 Ontario Ave. W., Minneapolis; 612-321-8324. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

ART

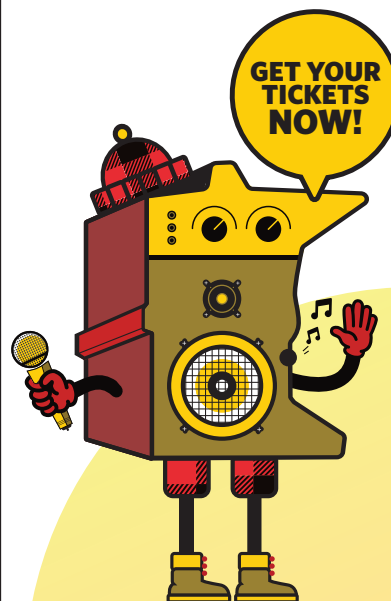
B-LECTRIC: A CELEBRATION OF ART AND LIGHT

BARBETTE

When you hear the words "outdoor art," you probably assume it's going to be a warm-weather exhibition. Not so for B-Lectric, a celebration of art and light coming to the corner of Irving and Lagoon Avenues in Uptown on Sunday. Thanks to a partnership between arts organization Northern Lights.mn and French bistro Barquette, ice walls will be erected to serve as projection screens for light-based installations. Lean against a sound bed to experience icebergs calving to Joshua McGarvey's *Ice Fall-Feel the Change*, see short films of First Nation communities from Canadian mobile recording studio Wapikoni, and witness footage of the Dakota Access Pipeline protest at Standing Rock in a documentary compilation by Graci Horne. The Art Shanty Projects will also be on site turning surfaces into art galleries-cum-social experiments. Shanties for story-writing, dancing, and maple syrup lollipop-making will be open. The Inflammati Fire Circus will be throwing flames while DJ Jake Rudh spins tunes. 4:30 to 9 p.m. Free. 1600 W. Lake St., Minneapolis; 612-827-5710. —ERICA RIVERA

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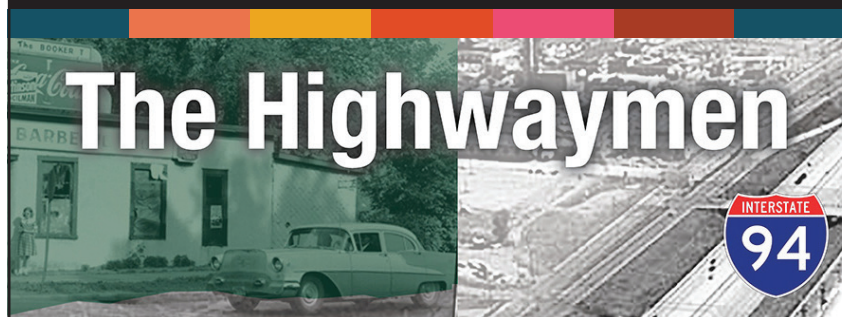
TICKETS: First Avenue and all First Avenue ticket outlets.

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history theatre



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Artwork designed by AKA NYC © 2012 AKA NYC

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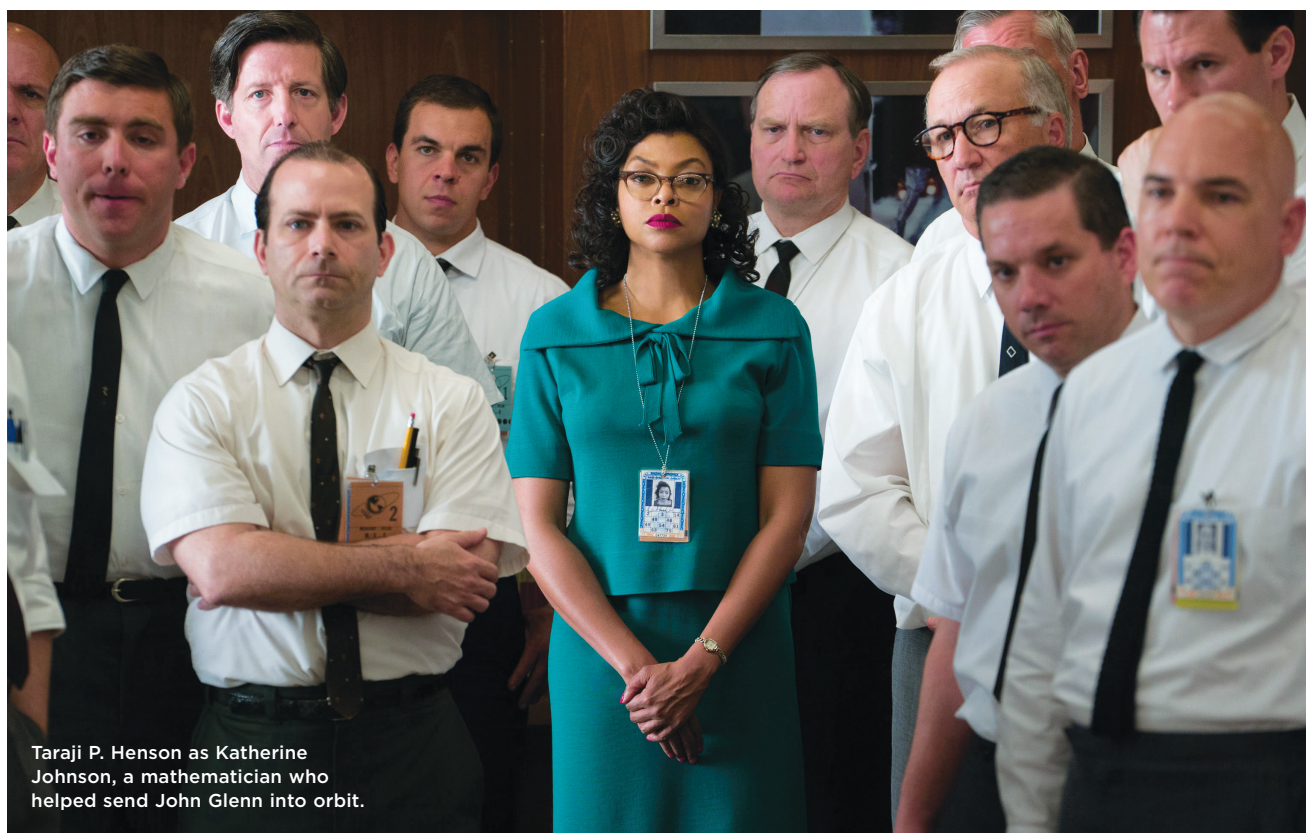
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ONE NIGHT ONLY

HIDDEN FIGURES

Bringing important black women of history — and of the present — into the spotlight



Taraji P. Henson as Katherine Johnson, a mathematician who helped send John Glenn into orbit.

HOPPER STONE

BY MICHAEL NORDINE

We don't deserve Taraji P. Henson.

After earning a richly deserved Oscar nod for embodying maternal warmth in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, she's most prominently been seen on TV's *Empire* these last few years. Until now, at least: *Hidden Figures* makes good on its title twice over, bringing both its subjects and its performers into the spotlight where they belong.

Henson is a magnetic enough presence to build a film around, but Theodore Melfi's account of three black women who played crucial roles at NASA in the 1960s doesn't have to. The main trio is rounded out by Octavia Spencer and Janelle Monáe, with Monáe in particular standing out: A musician who'd barely acted prior to last year, she's excellent both here and in *Moonlight* (as

is Mahershala Ali, who likewise appears in both films).

Henson plays Katherine Johnson, a mathematical genius called in to assist the effort of safely launching John Glenn into space; Spencer is Dorothy Vaughn, manager of the "Colored Computers" department, not that her title and pay reflect her responsibilities; and Monáe is Mary Jackson, who'd already be an engineer were the system not designed to prevent her from reaching her full potential. This being an inspired-by-true-events tale of overcoming the odds, there's never any question of them ascending to their rightful positions. Even so, *Hidden Figures* is the rare crowd-pleaser to earn its tears of joy.

The racism these three women encounter in the workplace isn't violent, but it is institutionalized and quietly dehumanizing: Katherine is the only black person in her department, meaning she's also the only one

who has to drink out of a coffee pot labeled "colored" and walk to another building half a mile away to use the bathroom. This latter problem leads to one of the film's most powerful scenes, as well as the only one typical of its genre: Asked where it is she disappears to for 45 minutes a day by her angry boss (Kevin Costner), she finally enlightens him about the bathroom situation — and he's taken aback.

The moment is key for two reasons. One is because Costner instantly goes out of his way to remedy the situation, providing the feel-good line "here at NASA, we all pee the same color" in the process. The other is because it shows how easy it is to perpetuate prejudice without intending to or even realizing it. Separate bathrooms in separate buildings never affected this Big Picture thinker until now, and so he was able to dismiss it as "just the way things are."

Kirsten Dunst and Jim Parsons play the

HIDDEN FIGURES

directed by Theodore Melfi
now playing, area theaters

other two products-of-their-environment types whose main function is to gradually understand that, though this is the way it's always been, it needn't be that way forever. Credit where it's due, though: *Hidden Figures* isn't another "white people solve racism" movie, but rather one in which they step aside and let those actually affected by it do work that benefits them all.

Films dealing with the racism of the past tend to flatter viewers' sensibilities, subtly assuring us that we've made so much progress since then and things are so much better now. Though it was surely unintentional, *Hidden Figures* has arrived at a moment when we're in danger of moving backward rather than forward — which only makes the film more important. **C**



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THEATER

SMASHED, NOT TRASHED

Shit-Faced Shakespeare is a charming drunk



LARA WOOLFSON

BY JAY GABLER

The idea that everything is funnier when you're plastered is nothing new, but the collision of high culture and soused irreverence is now becoming a trend in branded entertainment. Comedy Central's *Drunk History* leads the pack, and now we have *Shit-Faced Shakespeare*, a live show, stumbling into town.

The franchise had its genesis on the U.K. Fringe circuit, moving on to London's West End and currently spreading across America. There are now productions in Boston, Atlanta, Austin, and St. Paul, where the Shit-Faced Shakespearians have a Friday and Saturday residency at Camp Bar through February with their take on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

This past weekend's opening performances featured veteran actors from U.K. and Boston shows; a local cast is being trained in and will start to take over this coming weekend. It hasn't been heavily promoted, but Twin Cities fans somehow got the memo. Saturday night's crowd was big, enthusiastic, and noticeably younger than the audience for previous Camp Bar shows like *Flanagan's Wake* and *Deer Camp: The Musical*.

The premise of *Shit-Faced Shakespeare* — as explained on Saturday by emcee Laura Sullivan — is that the company has taken “five fine Shakespearean actors” and gotten one of them “properly shit-faced.” Sullivan produced, as evidence, a depleted bottle of sparkling wine and two Red Stripe empties. Two audience members are empowered,

SHIT-FACED SHAKESPEARE

Camp Bar
490 N. Robert St., St. Paul
651-292-1844; through February 25

with horn and gong, to call for more drinks if it seems like the actor is sobering up.

On Saturday, Beth-Louise Priestley played Hermia in the most appealing version of “shit-faced” ever seen. Giggling and stumbling her way into the woods with Lysander (Mac Young), Priestley repeatedly wandered off the already-loose book, causing sympathetic consternation among her castmates, including Stacey Norris as Helena and John Mitton as Demetrius.

By the end of the show, everything has gone to hell and been patched back up again, which is about as much as you can make of the original plot. Those familiar with the real play will catch an additional level of humor, but by no means do you need to be conversant with the original to enjoy the interactive antics of the Shit-Faced troupe.

The genius of the concept is that having only one of the cast members “shit-faced” focuses your attention on the actor who's stumbling into the scenery while you almost don't notice that the actors playing it straight are being pretty funny as well.

Another smart choice the producers have made is to retain the one-hour, no-intermission format they inherited from the Fringe. Shows start at 9:30 p.m., making it easy to grab dinner first or to just arrive at the bar early and get... well, you know. Let's put it this way: You're not having a triple espresso. ☞

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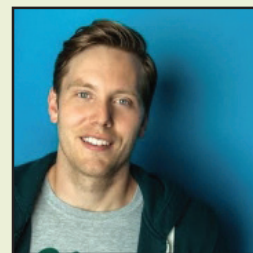
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IAN OUNDO

33, PROJECT MANAGER,
FASHION DESIGNER/
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What are you wearing?

My entire outfit with the exception of the fedora is Alfani, and bought at Macy's.

Describe your style:

I think style is a snapshot of how one feels at that particular moment in time. So I usually dress up the way I feel, and on this day I felt like being very vibrant, warm, and colorful.

Favorite designer?

Ralph Lauren.



MARA DIETRICH

23, SALES CONSULTANT
AT POSH BRIDAL COUTURE,
FOUNDER OF MARA MARIE BRIDAL

What are you wearing?

A vintage coat from Savers, black romper from Zara, black tights from Target, Christian Louboutin pumps, Marc by Marc Jacobs purse.

Describe your style:

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Favorite designer?

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TAYLOR HAGE

27, STYLE BLOGGER AT
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What are you wearing?

Topshop jacquard jacket and velvet bodysuit, Joe's Jeans, Steve Madden Sharini boots, Kate Spade Byrdie bag.

Describe your style:

I love chic street-style looks, but will also throw on an LBD for a night out.

Hardest part of dressing up in the winter?

Knowing that no one will see the carefully planned outfit I am wearing under all the layers of winter outerwear.



ASHLEYN PRZEDWIECKI

26, NONPROFIT COMMUNICATIONS,
COSTUME DESIGNER TURNED ETHICAL
FASHION ADVOCATE

What are you wearing?

Raven + Lily top, skirt from Buffalo Exchange, Trades of Hope necklace, Parker Clay tote.

Describe your style:

After working in the textile industry and seeing the environmental and social impact, I shifted my wardrobe to contain clothing that embodies ethical or sustainable practices. Not only has this transition opened up my eyes, I feel more creative in the boundaries of shopping secondhand, fair trade, or ethically sourced.

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4 - 5:30 pm: Soundcheck PR

SUNDAY, JAN. 29

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fri : january 27

7pm : laura and sean's movie
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10pm : camp dark,
whale house, bartell

sat : january 28

7pm : trivia mafia presents

331 drinkin' spelling bee

10pm : hey, that's my jam dance party!
hey there handsome vs. slow moe

sun : january 29

3-5:30pm : corpse reviver (music from
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8pm : trivia mafia

mon : january 30

8pm : the roe family singers
10pm : doug otto and friends

tue : january 31

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BACK ON THE BEAT

Twin Cities rap great P.O.S roars back from health woes on new album *Chill, Dummy*

BY ERIK THOMPSON

There is struggling to make a record, and then there's what P.O.S went through.

The 35-year-old Minneapolis rapper born Stef Alexander underwent a kidney transplant back in 2014. He spent more than a year on dialysis before that, forcing him to cancel an extensive tour in support of his last album, 2012's *We Don't Even Live Here*.

His recovery over the past three years — in between rare solo shows and live gigs alongside his Doomtree crew — has been arduous, he says, but the surgery abated the chronic kidney disease he's suffered from since his teens.

"I feel like I'm as close to full strength as I can be," P.O.S reports. "I'm older than I was when I got the transplant, but I feel way better than I did back then."

Last January, as his strength returned, P.O.S began constructing the skeletal parts of what would become his new record, *Chill, Dummy*. Serious recording sessions began in earnest four months ago at the Hideaway Studios in northeast Minneapolis, as well as in the home studios of P.O.S and some friends. There is a fitful urgency that courses through the album's 12 inventive tracks, with P.O.S conjuring the lyrical intensity of a man who knows how fortunate he is to still be here.

Chill, Dummy serves as P.O.S' playful but pragmatic advice to himself: to slow down and not overthink every detail.

"The title is definitely directed at me," P.O.S says with a laugh. "Anybody who relates to some of the songs can turn it in on themselves, too. But so much of the lyrics are written at me, kind of freaking out about reconnecting with my friends and reconnecting with life after being sick."

P.O.S reunites with his friends in a major way on the new record, which drops Friday. In addition to longtime collaborator and primary Doomtree beatmaker Lazerbeak, he called on Kathleen Hanna, Busdriver, Lizzo, Open Mike Eagle, Allan Kingdom, Astronautalis, Lady Midnight, and several others to add to the feisty collaborative spirit of the record.

On "Pieces/Ruins," Busdriver's hook — "All of the places we love have been left



Chill, Dummy is P.O.S' first solo LP since his 2014 kidney transplant.

NATE RYAN

in ruins" — forms the wistful centerpiece, illuminating the longing for lost, special places from our past.

"We had been having a long talk about gentrification," P.O.S says. "When you're a kid, you hang out at your spot every day. You've got your nooks, and your corner store, and your block. You make yourself, you make your personality. But just like the hook says, you get older and you stop looking so hard for those places. Other people see your corners as potential parking lots or ways to get money."

Another highlight of the album is "Faded." On it, P.O.S transforms "Faded High" — a 2010 song from his soft-rock supergroup GAYNGS — into something that feels entirely new.

"When ['Faded High'] came out, I thought it was really awesome and I wanted to make my own version of it," he says mischievously. "When it was time to make this record, I had an idea and just asked [GAYNGS ringleader/producer] Ryan [Olson], 'Can you send me the stems of that song so I can make a new one?'"

The reworked version features P.O.S' exuberant rhymes blending with original vocals from Bon Iver's Justin Vernon and Minneapolis upstart Lady Midnight. Her rich, soulful voice is featured all over the album.

"I came to the Hideaway studio and it was extremely enjoyable and effortless," Lady Midnight says of the *Chill, Dummy* recording process. "[P.O.S] had a very clear

idea to start with, very much a director of his vision, but once that foundation was set, Stef encouraged me to just open up and vocalize my heart. The energy and chemistry felt very electric — even victorious — in the studio that day."

That session might not have been possible without the help of P.O.S' fans, who assisted financially and emotionally throughout his long recovery. Doomtree managed to crowd-fund more than \$40,000 to help pay medical bills, and P.O.S says the supportive comments from fans kept him going through the darkest days of his dialysis and transplant surgery.

"That was the stuff that kept me wanting to wake up every morning," P.O.S says. "Without my family, my close friends, Doomtree, and these comments, I would have lost it. Mary [Thayer], my manager and good friend, actually went through and wrote everybody's comments down in a book and gave it to me while I was in my bed sick. Even now, I still flip through it and read everything people wrote."

Making *Chill, Dummy* proved to be cathartic, a way for P.O.S to work through the emotions that mounted during his health scare.

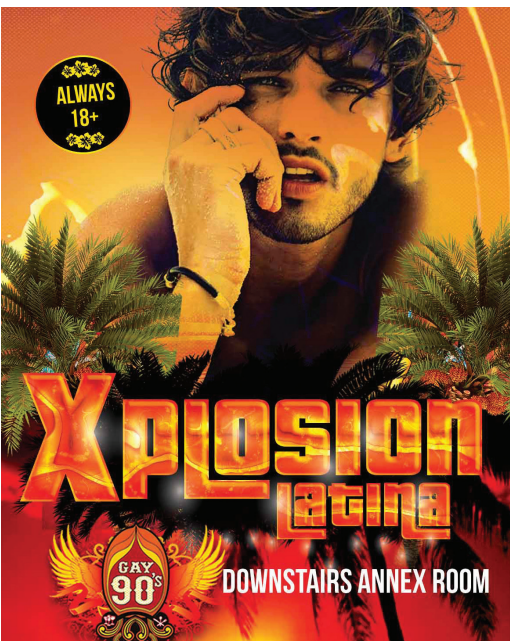
"A lot of this record is very much just me being really mad at me, it's really inward," he reveals. "There were some really hard times during when I was sick that I didn't even really acknowledge until I was feeling a lot better. And then I got to look back and say, 'Wow, I was really struggling.'"

To give some love back to his hometown fans, P.O.S lined up two local shows in support of *Chill, Dummy*. The intimate 7th St. Entry gig this Friday sold out in a matter of minutes, but he'll return to First Avenue's Mainroom on March 17. Both those spaces hold special significance for P.O.S.

"If I'm being honest, I didn't have any other goals in my music career aside from playing First Avenue," he admits. "So, once I hit and then surpassed that goal, I had to reassess my whole life. Like, OK, so what do I want to do now?"

No matter what he does now — or next — it's clear the music world is invested in his success. **Q**

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SOMI

ORDWAY, FRIDAY 1.27

Somi is an exquisite, sophisticated, and sultry singer. She can dice nuance with sly imagination as well as shoot flames of passion, etching emotional highs and lows with rare finesse. Born and raised in Illinois, daughter of parents from Uganda and Rwanda, Somi calls her music New African Jazz, a distinctive fusion of jazz, soul, R&B, and a wide swath of African music, mostly Afro-pop. She upped the ante on that already powerful formula when she moved to Lagos, Nigeria, for 18 months before recording her last album, *The Lagos Music Salon*. It's extraordinarily conceived and accomplished, telling vivid stories of pain, anguish, love, and empowerment with riveting intensity and beguiling charm. Angélique Kidjo shares vocals on "Lady Revisited," which taps Fela Kuti's Afrobeat. "Love Juju" evokes King Sunny Ade's scintillating guitar. Rapper Common guests on "When Rivers Cry," a tale of environmental degradation with neo-classical strings. "Four Women" picks up Nina Simone's tale of African women's travails. Expect Somi to preview material from her next album, *Petite Afrique*. 7:30 p.m. \$27-\$37. 345 Washington St., St. Paul; 651-224-4222.

—RICK MASON

THE CURRENT'S 12TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

FIRST AVENUE, FRIDAY 1.27 & SATURDAY 1.28

Frankly, there isn't enough room in this space to adequately praise all the acts slated to play 89.3 the Current's two-night 12th birthday celebration. Two of Minnesota's beloved singer-songwriters — Minneapolis' Jeremy Messersmith, whose most recent release is 2014's *Heart Murmurs*, and St. Paul's Haley Bonar, who dropped her celebrated *Impossible Dream* LP last year — are slated to headline on Friday and Saturday, respectively. Non-local talent will include the thoroughly genuine Philly-based rock act Strand of Oaks (whose upcoming *Hard Love* LP, out next month, is something to get excited about) and the harmony-happy sister trio Joseph on Friday, then the heavily Beatles- and Beach Boys-influenced youngsters the Lemon Twigs on Saturday. The rest of the lineup largely serves as a glimpse of Minnesota's musical well-roundedness, with highlights including (but not limited to) Afrobeat ensemble Black Market Brass on Friday, plus funky Afrofuturist experimenters ZULUZULUU and garage-rocker Monica LaPlante on Saturday. 18+. 7 p.m. \$20 per night. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388.

—MICHAEL MADDEN

50 CENT

MYTH, SATURDAY 1.28

Between his first two solo albums — 2003's *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* and 2005's *The Massacre* — Queens rapper 50 Cent was wildly popular for his combination of unshakeable choruses and East Coast gangsta rap steeliness. His songs were so infectious that, with 2005's *Olivia*-featuring "Candy Shop," he may have had your little brother, sister, or cousin singing about oral sex whether they knew it or not. Fast-forward to 2017 and he's long since solidified his iconic status in American popular culture. His last major hit was 2012's "My Life," with longtime collaborator Eminem and Maroon 5's Adam Levine, but in recent years he's remained relevant by other metrics. The 41-year-old has displayed both a loyalty to his East Coast hip-hop origins and a willingness to adapt to rap's current post-regional state. 2015's *The Kanan Tape* showed him embracing younger artists like Sonny Digital ("I'm the Man") and Post Malone ("Tryna Fuck Me Over"), and he's recently guested on Bampton rapper YG's excellent looseie "I Wanna Benz." Fans are still (im)patiently waiting on 50's sixth solo album, *Street King Immortal*. All ages. 6 p.m. \$50-\$200. 3090 Southlawn Dr., St. Paul; 651-779-6984.

—MICHAEL MADDEN

TWIN CITIES WINTER JAZZ FESTIVAL

VARIOUS ST. PAUL LOCATIONS, SATURDAY 1.28 & SUNDAY 1.29

As the frosty version of summertime's Twin Cities Jazz Fest, the two-day T.C. Winter Jazz is leaner and more hunkered down. But it has a fiery spark at its core in the guise of headliner Nicholas Payton, renowned New Orleans trumpeter and cultural activist/philosopher. Payton will play the spotlight gig at the St. Paul Hotel Sunday evening with his latest ensemble, performing material from his forthcoming double album, *Afro-Caribbean Mixtape*. Acclaimed for his technical trumpet mastery, Payton initially emphasized traditional New Orleans jazz roots, particularly Louis Armstrong's work. His inherent eclecticism gradually followed those NOLA tendrils far and wide, chasing the musical threads of the African diaspora from bebop to hip-hop with dozens of stops in between. Payton calls his stuff post-modern New Orleans music. This year's festival also includes screenings of historic jazz films, shows in St. Paul clubs and on the St. Paul Winter Carnival's outdoor stage in Rice Park, and performances by Chicago pianist Jon Weber, local pianist Sam Rosenstone, and a Women's All-Star group of local jazz artists led by singer Patty Peterson. \$25-\$75. See full schedule at twincitiesjazzfestival.com. —RICK MASON

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SAVAGE LOVE

ITMFA!

A handy acronym
for the Trump era

I am quite the follower on social media—Facebook and Twitter in particular. I make no trolling comments, no #MAGA hashtags; I just look. I've lost interest in pornography, so I use everyday pictures of women, typically selfies. It helps me to know the story behind the face and body. None of these pics are pornographic—just feel-good selfies. I don't communicate with these people, because that would be creepy. I'm not worried about whether this is abnormal. I just wondered if people would be okay with this, if people were aware of behavior like mine when they post, and if I should ask these girls for their permission to wank to their selfies.

NOT ANTHONY WEINER

So long as you're wanking alone, wanking with a reasonable expectation of privacy, and not bothering anyone who isn't a sex partner or a sex-advice professional with your wanking, NAW, you can wank to whatever you'd like—except for images of child rape, aka "child pornography."

You remind me of the proverbial shoe salesman with a foot fetish. (Full disclosure: proverb of mine, not a proverb of Proverbs.) Let's say a guy working in a high-end shoe store has an intense attraction to feet. Is it inappropriate for him to get an obvious boner while helping women try on shoes? Of course it is. It would also be inappropriate for him to drool or pant—and it would be super inappropriate of him to ask the women he's serving if he can jack off about their feet after his shift. But if he can be completely professional, if he can go eight hours without giving off any signs of secret perving, he's free to upload mental images to his spank bank for later. We're all free to do so, and it's only creepy if the people whose images we're uploading/repurposing are made aware that we're uploading/repurposing them.

So in answer to your question, under no circumstances should you ask the girls whose selfies you're wanking to for their permission. People who post revealing pictures know they run the risk of their pics being wanked to by random strangers. But there's a difference between knowing some stranger might be wanking to your pics and hearing from one of them. Being asked by a wanker for permission to wank drags the poster into the wanker's fantasies—and not only is that creepy, NAW, it's also no way



Dan Savage

to show your gratitude. If some stranger is going to make your day by posting a hot pic, why would you ruin theirs?

Listening to pundits discuss the president on the radio, I was inspired by your brilliant acronym (DTMFA) to yell, "Impeach the motherfucker already!" I'd love to see a line of bumper stickers and T-shirts bearing that sensible message: ITMFA! I appeal to you to bring this acronym into our everyday vocabulary.

DUMPED MY MOTHERFUCKER ALREADY

Dear readers: DMMA wrote me that letter in 2006. She wasn't referring to Donald Trump, our current awful president, but George W. Bush, our last truly awful president. I thought DMMA's idea was great, I put up a website (impeachthemothefuckeralready.com), and I raised more than \$20,000 selling ITMFA lapel pins and buttons. I donated half the money to the ACLU and the other half to two Democratic candidates for the U.S. Senate. (My readers helped turf Rick Santorum out of office!)

I didn't think I'd see a worse president than George W. Bush in my lifetime. But here we are. So I'm bringing back my line of ITMFA buttons and adding T-shirts and, yes, hats to the ITMFA collection. Go to impeachthemothefuckeralready.com or, if that's too much typing, ITMFA.org to order some ITMFA swag for yourself or someone you love. All the money raised will be donated to the American Civil Liberties Union, Planned Parenthood, and the International Refugee Assistance Project.

We're in for a long and ugly four years, folks. Let's raise some money for groups fighting Trump, let's bring ITMFA back into our vocabulary, and let's remember that we—people who voted against Trump, who want to see him out of office as quickly as possible—are the majority. ITMFA!

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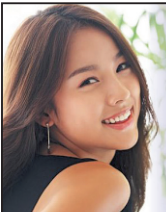
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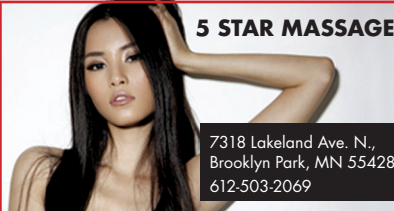
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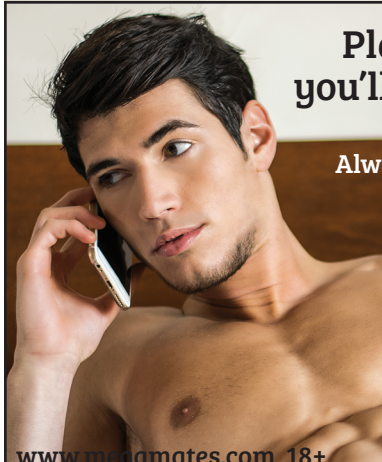


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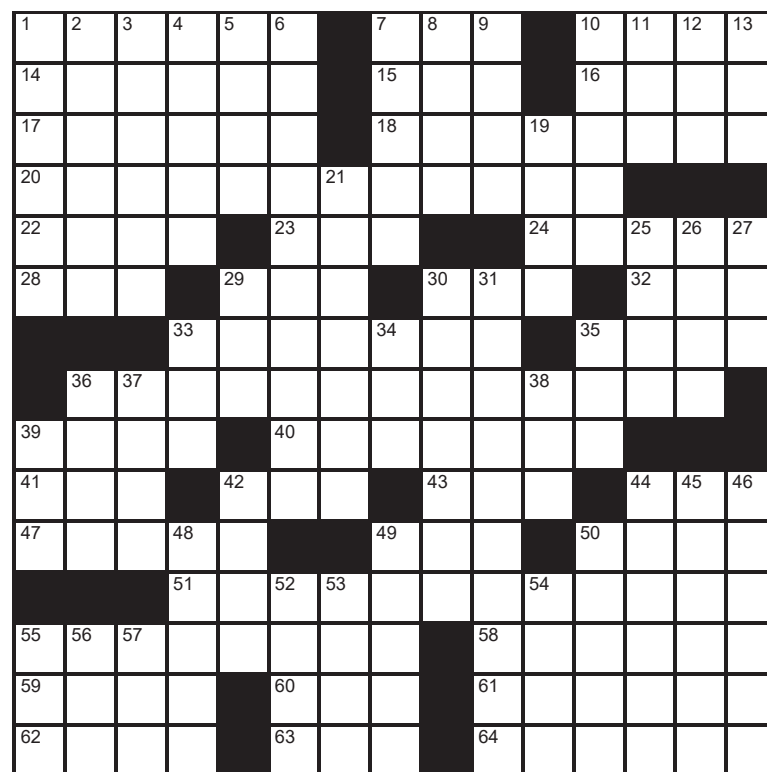
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Across

- 1 "The Sandman" author Neil
- 7 Unreadable paper
- 10 Surprise party command
- 14 Yale nickname
- 15 Middle East commodity
- 16 Days gone by
- 17 Star chart
- 18 Cologne for those just starting law school?
- 20 Design on an eagle's gripper?
- 22 "___ I'm saying is ..."
- 23 The Mormons, briefly
- 24 Kind of orange
- 28 Grunts, for short
- 29 He took the red pill
- 30 "The cops!"
- 32 Traveling bag
- 33 Ground
- 35 Halloween purchases
- 36 Wishing Evita and Juan were still in power?
- 39 Twitter's CEO Dorsey
- 40 One always picking things up
- 41 Unreturned serve
- 42 Pale lager from Milwaukee, briefly
- 43 Planetoid
- 44 Chess player nicknamed "The Magician From Riga"
- 47 Barcelona superstar Lionel
- 49 Close bud
- 50 Author Sarah ___ Jewett

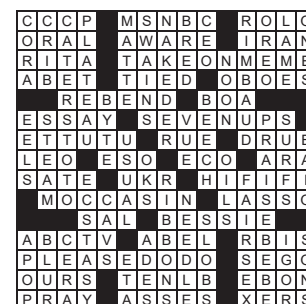
- 51 Guide for how to be like Charlton?
- 55 "And now for the next one" ... and an alternate title for this puzzle
- 58 On the hook
- 59 Plowing team
- 60 It might be sprayed on
- 61 Ford of fashion
- 62 Piece of memory
- 63 Place for a rooter
- 64 Put down, slangily

Down

- 1 Skip the date
- 2 High-pH compound
- 3 Pastoral poems
- 4 Letters in the office
- 5 Jackson of country
- 6 Jewelry in a cup
- 7 Plant parts
- 8 Isn't wrong?
- 9 TV show with a finger L in its logo
- 10 Choir pieces
- 11 "Money's coming," for short
- 12 RX writers
- 13 Faux-shocked cry
- 19 ___ Hubbard
- 21 Decorated
- 25 Equal to
- 26 Tour itinerary
- 27 "Rogue One" extras, briefly
- 29 Metroid platform
- 30 "The Larry Sanders Show" co-star

- 31 Not on the roster
- 33 "Gotta do better than that"
- 34 Muslim official
- 35 General Tso's pan
- 36 Ren Faire club
- 37 Slays, slangily
- 38 Messy cookout item
- 39 Breakfast spread
- 42 Outward appearance
- 44 "Survivor" gangs
- 45 Shaker V.I.P.
- 46 Folklore tale
- 48 Spruce up a spat
- 49 Pretty, like a lass
- 50 Roundish figures
- 52 Some noncoms: Abbr.
- 53 Exactly
- 54 Supposedly legit Roman numeral 4
- 55 Violent crowd
- 56 Big name in acne medication
- 57 Rex checker

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